



# **EMPLOYEE MORALE OF FARMWORKERS AT DIHOAI CHICKEN FARM, WELKOM**

By

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A field study submitted to the UFS Business School in the Faculty of Economic  
and Management Sciences in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree

**Magister in Business Administration**

At the

UFS Business School  
University of the Free State  
Bloemfontein

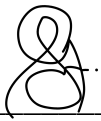
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Date: 20 November 2022

## Declaration

“I declare that the field study hereby handed in for the qualification Masters in Business Administration at the UFS Business School at the University of the Free State is my own independent work and that I have not previously submitted the same work, either as a whole or in part, for a qualification at/in another university/faculty.

I also hereby cede copyright of this work to the University of the Free State.”



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Sithandile Modiroa

Date: 20 November 2022

## **Acknowledgement**

I humbly dedicate this thesis to my daughter, Reratile Iviwe Modiroa and son, Kaelo Hlumelo Modiroa, and my mother, Thembeke Gcilitshana, for their endless love and support even in the toughest of times.

I sincerely thank my supervisor Dr. TS Marange for her patience and thoroughness through the journey.

My greatest appreciation to the participants and David Mphuthi owner and CEO of Dihoai Chicken Farm for his warm reception and allowing me to use the organisation in my study.

To all those who supported me during this academic journey, I appreciate you all.

## **Abstract**

The study aims to investigate the factors affecting the morale of farmworkers at Dihoai Chicken Farm, Welkom. The sample size of the study was 25 participants. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed through thematic analysis. The study is based on literature. The study's results identified factors that affect the morale of the farmworkers as their remuneration, job security, rewards, recognition and training.

The organisation should consider introducing a reward and recognition system and reviewing its remuneration packages and training and development program.

**Key Words:** employee morale, remuneration, reward, recognition, training and development.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction and background

Agriculture is an important sector of the South African economy. Despite the negative economic consequences of the Covid-19 epidemic, the agricultural sector recorded one of the highest growth rates in the second quarter of 2021 (Statistics South Africa, 2021). This is due to the fact that agriculture acts as a market to other sub-sectors through backward linkages and as a supplier to other sectors through forward linkages. Agriculture also has a sustainable contribution to employment in South Africa.

Therefore, by supporting the agricultural industry, policymakers directly or indirectly contribute to different sub-sectors, such as food services and manufacturing, that depend on the agricultural sector. One such policy is the Department of Agriculture and Rural Developments Integrated Growth and Development Plan (2012), which was developed to provide a long-term plan for the growth and development of South Africa's agricultural, forestry, and fisheries sectors to fulfill major national goals and results (Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, 2012).

However, certain aspects identified in this growth and development plan contribute to the lack of strategic direction, including inadequate implementation competence and a lack of a comprehensive strategic documents (National Planning Commission, 2012). Agricultural jobs in South Africa rebounded in the second quarter of 2021 to 862 000 (Agricultural Business Chamber, 2021). GDP from Agriculture in South Africa decreased to 112 164.42 ZAR Million in the third quarter of 2021 from 129 761.84 ZAR Million in the second quarter of 2021 (Trading Economics, 2021). This has a direct consequence on employment reduction within the industry.

Farmers in South Africa have been battling with implementing the R23.19 minimum wage for farm workers and issues pertaining to the current pandemic, water scarcity, and challenges with energy sources. The current World Bank data as of January 2022 indicates a reduction of 0,4%; this is in relation to the agricultural sector's total percentage of employment to be at 4,9% (The World Bank, 2022).

Farmworkers are the primary contributors to a healthy economy. Fruit, vegetables, meat and other farm produce pass through many hands before they land on grocery store shelves and, eventually, kitchen tables. They are essential to the food processing industry but are invisible to customers (RAFI, 2019). Farmworkers are the individuals who are closely involved with the growing, harvesting, cooking, and processing of produce on many farms and growing operations. While farmers with some crops have migrated to machine harvesting, many crops still need human handling. Unfortunately, the workers with the most direct interaction with the products we consume are often perceived as being at the bottom of the food chain hierarchy. This reality is embodied in their social positioning, political and legal care, working conditions, and income (RAFI, 2019). It must be noted that the industry's bigger percentage of employees is illiterate and uneducated.

In the South African labour market, farmworkers need to deal with things such as weather, which directly impacts the farm produce, and long working hours, which impact the quality of life. In South Africa, too many farm workers still lack clean and safe drinking water, which directly impacts the well-being of farmworkers. Many corporates have wellness programmes that are initiatives in the workplace meant to promote and improve the health and well-being of employees (Ragan, 2018). The focus of these wellness programmes is screening activities that help identify health risks and initiate interventions to reduce risk and promote a healthy lifestyle (Mattke et al., 2013). Employee wellness significantly improves morale and increases retention rates (van der Linde, 2018).

Consequently, employee morale is a crucial factor affecting employee-wellbeing and workplace productivity. This is a sound reason for employers to closely monitor employees' morale as it is linked with positive work behaviours. As such, it is time that farmworkers become proactive and engaged concerning their well-being. Thus, it is crucial for organisations to closely monitor employees' morale because not doing so could hinder the organisation's ability to achieve its goals, contributing to reduced productivity, higher staff turnover, and a loss of profitability. In today's competitive environment, organizations devote a sizable percentage of their yearly budgets to maintaining and boosting employee morale, with the underlying idea that morale substantially influences employee job performance.

Although numerous ways of assessing staff morale exist across organisations, there can be a wide variance in workplace features and elements that influence such morale; hence, the relevance of staff morale and its intricacies within an organizational setting cannot be overstated (Cheema, 2017). From an organizational standpoint, high morale amongst members of staff is desired since it promotes individual effort, which in turn promotes organisational performance. This study focused on farm workers and how they have different organisation settings that might impact their staff morale compared to employees in other organisations. For instance, according to (le Roux, 2020) the houses of farm workers staying in farmhouses are in better condition. They are well looked after, as they have electricity and running water compared to those living elsewhere but working on the farm, which affects well-being and morale. The study will therefore investigate farm workers' morale among Dihoai Chicken Farm employees.

Dihoai Chicken Farm was established in 2006 by David Mphuti. David wanted to realise his dream of farming by purchasing 20 hectares of land in Welkom and planting vegetables with a 4-man workforce. Dihoai Chicken Farm soon realised the need to diversify because the planting season in Free State is short, and profits made from vegetable farming were not enough to sustain them through the year. In 2011, David started chicken farming by building a chicken house with 500 chickens. He then managed to secure R10 million in funding from the National Empowerment Fund. The funding was used to build a feed plant, a chicken house with a capacity of 35 000 and a licenced abattoir that can slaughter up to 2 000 chickens per day. Sixteen years later, the Dihoai Chicken Farm has become well-established in the chicken and animal food-manufacturing industry. Dihoai Farm's chicken house now houses 35 000 broilers and 15 000 layers, and the abattoir slaughters 2 000 chickens daily. They also process and store their animal feed. Dihoai Chicken Farm has three outlets selling its products and employing 25 farmworkers. The farmworkers are aged between 18 and 60. Dihoai Chicken Farm is currently beginning to experience an increase in issues like absenteeism. The researcher will therefore focus on understanding which factors may affect the morale of the farmworker there. This often leaves Dihoai Chicken Farm with the issue of underproductive staff and a reduction in expected revenues.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Farmworkers' morale is crucial as farming provides the basic need of society, thereby improving food security. Unfortunately, the farm workers with the most direct connection with the produce we eat are often considered the lowest on the food chain hierarchy. Their social positioning, political and legal treatment, working conditions, and wages reflect this reality, which might lead to low morale and engagement. The problem being experienced is that farmworker morale is beginning to become low, which is evident in the increasing absenteeism and alcohol use among the farmworkers. If the problem is not addressed, low morale can result in a schism between employees, co-workers, employment, supervisors, and the organisation; this will further lead to dissatisfaction, poor productivity, crippling absenteeism levels and poor turnover for Dihoai Chicken Farm. Hence, understanding the factors that affect morale is important, as high morale is associated with higher productivity and lower turnover rates. These directly affect productivity and profitability, contributing to improved business results.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

- i) Which factors affect farmworker morale?
- ii) What strategies can be used to enhance the morale of farmworkers at Dihoai Chicken Farm, Welkom?

## **1.4 Objectives**

### **1.4.1 Primary Objective**

- i) To identify factors affecting farmworkers' morale at Dihoai Chicken Farm, Welkom.

### **1.4.2 Secondary Objectives**

- i. To conduct a literature review on employee morale.
- ii. To determine strategies to enhance the morale of farmworkers at Dihoai Chicken Farm, Welkom, if necessary.

## **1.5 Research Methodology**

### **1.5.1 Research Design**

The proposed study adopted the qualitative research design, which aimed at understanding the meaning people or groups ascribe to human or societal problems or phenomena using non-numerical data (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews.

The study's qualitative research methodology was phenomenological since the research topic was viewed through the eyes of persons who had first-hand experience with it (Bryman & Bell, 2014). As a result, the participants' unique perspectives on the study's topic were utilised.

### **1.5.2 Population**

A population is every person or every entity that could be included in the research. It defines the scope of a research study and offers the reader environmental and contextual information (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). The Dihoai Chicken Farm has 30 employees however, only 25 farmworkers from this population will be interviewed as a sample. The sample population interviewed comprised male and female farmworkers 18 years and older.

### **1.5.3 Sampling**

Sampling is a method of selecting a sample from an individual or a large group of people to conduct research (Bhardwaj, 2019).

#### **1.5.3.1 Sample size**

A sample is a subset of a broader population of people, objects, or objects chosen for assessment. (Bhardwaj, 2019). The recommended sample size for qualitative research interviews is 20 – 30 respondents (Malterud et al., 2016). For this study, the sample size was 25 respondents.

#### **1.5.3.2 Sample methods**

The selection of participants was made using non-probability sampling. Since the sample required participants to respond to the research questions, purposive sampling

was preferred. Purposive sampling is the deliberate choice of participants due to the qualities of the participant and is a non-random technique (Etikan, 2016). Since the study intends to identify factors affecting farmworkers' morale at Dihoai Chicken Farm, the researcher needs to allocate farmworkers willing to participate in providing information based on being practically involved in the farm.

### **1.6 Data Collection Method**

The research method for collecting the participants' perceptions followed semi-structured interviews, allowing for probing and exploring the subject matter (Bryman et al., 2014).

### **1.7 Recruitment Strategy**

Permission was sought from the company regarding conducting interviews. Once this permission had been secured, the participants were interviewed at the workplace. Those farmworkers concerned with animal husbandry and the upkeep of the stables were selected from the list provided by the organisation.

The researcher travelled to the town where management introduced the researcher and explained the study to the farm workers. The researcher spent a few days at the farm to ensure the completion of the data collection. These interviews were done as soon as permission from the ethics committee and the organisation was received.

### **1.8 Data analysis**

Narrative thematic analysis was used to analyse information obtained from the participants (Bryman et al., 2014). This analysis entails extracting themes from the participants' replies and organising the participants' thinking around those emerging topics. (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Identifying fundamental thinking patterns within participants' replies is crucial for deducing significant signals from the interviews. In this study, the researcher discovered themes on the important elements influencing farmworker morale.

## **1.9 Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are a collection of principles that govern a researcher's study designs and procedures in research (Arifin, 2018). Scientists and researchers must always follow guidelines while collecting data from persons involved in the study. (Bhandari, 2021). Accordingly, permission was sought from the University of the Free State's Research Ethics Committee. Next, consent to conduct this research was requested from the company, especially to interview their farm workers. Participants were made aware of the study's objective to get their signed voluntary consent to participate (Arifin, 2018). More of the ethical considerations were discussed in chapter 4.

## **1.10 Demarcation of the study**

The research study consolidated the perspectives of the farmworkers of Dihoai Chicken Farm in Welkom, relating to the factors that affect their morale. This research study is classified under human resources because it deals with the well-being of farmworkers. Due to time and financial constraints, the study was limited to 25 participants drawn through purposive sampling.

## **1.11 Chapter layout**

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

Chapter 4 Data analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 5 Summary of Findings, recommendations and conclusion

## **1.12 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the background to the literature review on farming in South Africa and morale. The chapter has discussed the problem statement and the objectives of the research. The chapter has further looked briefly at the methodology used in this dissertation. This research is divided into five chapters. Chapter one gave

the study's introduction and motivation behind the study, introduced the organisation where the study was conducted, emphasized the study's objectives, and concluded with the chapter outline sequence and conclusion. The second chapter includes a survey of the literature on morale. The research methodology employed in this study is discussed in Chapter 3. It discusses the procedures and strategies employed to collect data. The study findings are presented in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the findings, recommendations and conclusion.

## **Chapter 2: Literature review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this literature review chapter, the researcher will look at conceptualising morale, morale factors, the importance of morale, the causes, and how they affect farm workers. The researcher will also discuss the challenges that farm workers in South Africa experience; the working and living conditions of farm workers; South African Legislation concerning farm workers; and the farm workers' contribution to sustainable agriculture and rural development. The first part of the chapter will be to have an in-depth understanding of morale as stated by the objective, and then application into the farming sector will be discussed later in the chapter. The goal is to have an in-depth understanding of morale following a literature review on employee morale, the factors that affect employee morale, and how important morale is to the success of an organisation.

### **2.2 Defining Morale**

Morale is a fundamental psychological concept that is not easy to define. It is not static and changes depending on a person's emotions (Sugang Devi & Ravi, 2018). It is an attitude of an employee toward their job, supervisor and organisation (Sugang Devi & Ravi, 2018).

Below are more definitions of morale:

- A psychological condition of affairs for happiness, composure, and resolution, morale is an employee's viewpoint toward various stakeholders of an organisation (Kumar & Ramaswamy, 2017).
- Morale is a feeling of confidence, usefulness, and purpose based on one's psychological well-being, as well as the spirit that exists in the group that makes the group want to succeed (Bowles & Cooper, 2009).
- Morale is the attitude and willingness to work (Venkatachalam & Sakunthala, 2015).
- Morale is how individuals feel about their work and organisation (Juneja, 2015).

Based on the above, morale is a product of the following (van Heerden, 2019):

- confidence in the organisation;
- the attitude that leads to action;
- the thoughts, hopes, and sentiments that influence people's readiness to collaborate; courage and confidence in one's work performance; and
- job satisfaction.

For the purpose of this study, morale is defined as an elusive and broadly defined concept that encompasses sentiments, emotions, attitudes, and perceptions of the organisation and its people. High morale is often connected with discipline, confidence, and a desire to succeed. (Shaban et al., 2017a). Employee morale is how enthusiastic employees are about going to work every day, how they handle their given responsibilities, and how the employees feel about the company's direction.

## **2.3 Factors influencing morale**

### **2.3.1 Technical Factors**

Technical factors are all the tangible and non-tangible resources that any institution provides to enable all employees to carry out their daily activities in realising the institution's outcomes and ability to handle adversity and adaptability (Myeni, 2010). Parashakti et al. (2020) states that equipment not functioning properly at the workplace results in the non-achievement of targets and affects the motivation of employees, which may lead to resignations. According to the study, the organisation should offer the necessary facilities or tools of the trade to ensure that work activities go well. Employees will find their tasks much simpler with these amenities, which will help them stay motivated at work. Therefore, an employee's enthusiasm toward their job depends on the availability of tools of the trade required to perform the job.

### **2.3.2 Individual Factors**

Individual factors include those that may impact the delivery of services like age, turnover, the period an employee has spent in an organisation, the level of education, responsibility, perspective, ability to handle adversity and adaptability (Myeni, 2010). Some common factors that may affect the morale barometer are the level at which the workloads and individual feelings are appreciated in relation to workforce diversity (Matsaung, 2014). The best mechanism to gauge the individual factors is simply through individual employee engagement and having proper improvement plans where necessary. Therefore, the perception of employees of a work environment and the organisation they work for must be considered because their perception is a lens or mindset through which they view people, events, and things.

### **2.3.3 Group Factors**

Group factors look at the workgroup interactions, how a group responds to leadership and the overall group thinking mentality over authority. In the group dynamic, group cohesion in achieving goals is paramount (Myeni, 2010). To ensure optimal effectiveness and efficiency in group work, work must be designed to elevate the morale of the group as a unit. Morale in a group setup is enhanced by clear, consistent, purposeful group goals, and these goals must appeal to an employee's individual goals (Hardy, 2009).

### **2.3.4 Situational Factors**

Situational factors include matters related to the job, for example, job satisfaction, how difficult it is to perform the job, and if there is any interest. These are regarded as intrinsic features, while the opposite, extrinsic features, will look at salary, working conditions, interpersonal relations, and supervision (Myeni, 2010). Many farm employees suffer from emotional instabilities, alcohol abuse, conflict with families and other concerns, including health issues that affect work effectiveness immensely. As a result of these, farmers or organisations in general need some social work perspective in addressing such issues.

### **2.3.5 Job-satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is the extent to which individuals like their employment. In other words, it refers to a worker's subjective assessment of their employment, either in its totality or in terms of its many aspects (Fernández-Macias & Muñoz de Bustillo Llorente, 2014). Numerous employment aspects might influence an employee's attitude about their employment. Job satisfaction can be affected by remuneration, the nature of the tasks, working conditions, and recognition (Kwabena Anin et al., 2015). In developing morale building processes, an organisation ultimately addresses job satisfaction.

### **2.3.6 Organisational commitment**

Organisational commitment and morale are linked because they both refer to psychological links between employees and the organisation. High morale means having a goal and working toward it, whereas commitment indicates long-term loyalty to the organisation (Hardy, 2009). Morale is a condition of cheerfulness, confidence and zeal (Latif, 2021). It is a mental and emotional state of being. A work-related outcome is an organisational commitment determined by morale (Devi & Vijayakumar, 2016).

### **2.3.7 Motivation**

Motivation is associated with the direction and strength of behaviour and the elements that impact people's behaviour. Motivation may refer to many factors, including people's goals, how they choose their goals, and how others try to change their behaviour (Osabiya, 2015). Although different, motivation is linked to morale. Hardy (2009, p. 28) states, "if motivation is regarded as the force which enables the individual to attain an objective, then it is undoubtedly part of the morale construct." Morale is a multifaceted set of attitudes and sentiments about one's job, whereas motivation is a function of one's desires and needs. Motivation leads to actions, and morale leads to feelings that lead to actions (Tayyar, 2014).

### **2.3.8 Job significance**

Job significance is defined as the subjective experience of how valuable employees find the work they do to be (Martela & Pessi, 2018); it influences the quality of work

life of employees, psychological well-being, and it is also associated with job satisfaction, organisational commitment (Yasin Ghadi et al.,2013), a decrease in turnover rate and absenteeism, and customer satisfaction (Leunissen et al., 2018). Job significance is important for an organisation's bottom line and employees' commitment and well-being (Bailey et al., 2019).

### **2.3.9 Organisational pride**

Helm (2013, p544) defines organizational pride as “the pleasure taken in being associated with one’s employer”, the sense of pleasure of being a member of the organisation. Masterson et al., (2017) verified the existence of organisational pride as a distinct emotion., which workers feel when they discover that their company adds value and changes lives, making them want to recommend it to others.

Employees who feel proud of their work and connected to their job will perform their best and give their all and are more inclined to suggest the company as a place to work to others seeking work (Nedlund, 2020). When employees have positive work pride, they are more productive, maintain good relationships with co-workers, enjoy going to work and have high morale (Klann, 2004).

## **2.4 Outcomes of high and low morale**

Morale is usually considered high or low (Mailela, 2018).

### **2.4.1 High Morale**

High morale amongst employees is when an employee has a favourable attitude (Matsaung, 2014). Employees' positive attitudes about their supervisors, peers, and juniors, as well as the work, organizational rules, and procedures, all contribute to high morale (Sugang Devi & Ravi, 2018). Jacobs (2014) affirms that employees with positive morale are glad to show up for work every day, feel more comfortable with the job tasks they need to perform and their co-workers, and are positive about how much they can accomplish within the organization.

#### **2.4.1.1 Advantages of high morale**

- **High employee retention rates**

Employees' that have high levels of morale within an organisation are less likely to leave the organisation in which they are employed (Mabindisa & Legoabe, 2021). High retention rates buffer an organisation against losses in productivity and high costs related to recruiting a new hire.(Weakliem & Frenkel, 2006).

- **Lower absentee rates**

An organisation with high morale levels amongst employees is less likely to experience high absenteeism levels (Ramkawal, 2018) . High levels of absenteeism affect productivity, increases labour costs if temporary replacements need to be sought for absent employees (Kinsey, 2021).

- **Improved Health**

Taking care of your employees' health benefits them and the company since it fosters a productive and efficient working environment. Employees' performance and health are intrinsically linked: a psychologically and mentally fit worker is happier, creative, driven and may boast higher levels of morale (Usen Paul, 2022).

- **Improved bottom line**

An organisation that looks after the morale of its employees is likely to be very productive and one that meets its goal (Kinsey, 2021).

## **2.4.2 Low Morale**

Low morale exists when employees display negative feelings such as dissatisfaction, discouragement and dislike for their job (Sugang Devi & Ravi, 2018). Sugang Devi and Devi (2018) further point out that the existence of mental unrest that results in low morale hampers the productivity of an organisation and also has the potential to lead to the ill health of employees.

### **2.4.2.1 Disadvantages of low morale**

- **High absenteeism**

Employees with low morale levels seek out reasons to avoid clocking in for work. A high rate of people failing to show up for work might have a negative impact on company productivity (Blankenship, 2014).

- **Conflicts within the organisation**

The disadvantage of low morale within an organisation results in emotional stress that becomes a catalyst for increased conflict amongst employees (Golden, 2012). Conflict has negative effects, such as increased absenteeism, work disruptions, lowered productivity, and increased organizational turnover (Shaban et al., 2017).

- **Poor quality of work**

Low morale levels leave employees feeling discourage and results in poor quality of work has a wide range of effects on a business, from low productivity and profitability levels to customer dissatisfaction and negative public impression (Shaban et al., 2017).

- **Insubordination**

An organisation with low morale levels results in disengagements amongst employees which may heighten anxiety levels among employees thus leading to insubordination (Sishi, 2022). In one study, this adversely affected the employees' working environment, productivity and morale at all levels (Blankenship, 2014).

### **2.4.3 Motivation theories to boost morale**

Motivation and morale are related as motivation theories help in boosting employee as well as team morale (Shaban et al., 2017b).

Below are theories that assist in boosting morale:

#### **2.4.3.1 Maslow's Needs Hierarchy**

Maslow (1970) identified specific human needs and classified them in hierarchical importance. The most fundamental of requirements are found at the bottom of the pyramid (Maslow, 1970). Higher-order requirements will not arise until lower-order requirements have been met (Cant & van Heerden, 2017) .



**Figure 1: Maslow's Needs Hierarchy**

Maslow's Needs Hierarchy (Nel et al., 2014) is based on five basic levels:

- Physiological: to survive, the most fundamental necessities such as food, medication, air, and water must be met.
- Safety: the need to be safe from physical and psychological harm.
- Love: the yearning for affection and belonging and the desire to be loved and to love.
- Esteem: the need for strength, self-confidence, status, and acknowledgment from others.
- Self-actualisation: the drive for self-actualization - to become the finest version of oneself.

According to Travieso (2013), the theory is general and can easily be applied to organizations as follows:

- Physiological needs: remuneration and basic tools of the trade
- Safety needs: safe work environment (physically and emotionally)
- Social needs: feeling like one is part of the team and not feeling isolated
- Esteem needs: recognition from co-workers and managers
- Self-actualization needs: promotion and specialised training opportunities.

Based on this theory, morale can be improved if management ensures that employees' lower-level needs are satisfied before investing resources (financial and non-financial) or time in a strategy that would be applied to higher levels of the pyramid (Travieso, 2013). For example, an employee who experiences bullying at the hands of his co-workers would not have their need for safety in the workplace satisfied; therefore, any efforts by superiors to recognise his good performance as far as work tasks are concerned would be short-lived.

According to Maslow, when people's needs are not met, their mental well-being suffers, which impacts their general well-being and productivity. When employees' hierarchical requirements are not met in full, they exhibit poor levels of employee engagement. This has a significant impact on staff morale, performance, and turnover.

### 2.4.3.2 Herzberg Dual Factor Theory



**Figure 2: Herzberg Dual Factor Theory**

Employees work to satisfy their personal needs as well as those of their families. However, job satisfaction is also important, and when an organization cannot maintain employees' job satisfaction, there will be a decline in performance and customer satisfaction as well as low employee morale (Senad & Amra, 2018).

Herzberg's theory categorizes factors that impact job satisfaction into hygiene and motivational factors (Herzberg et al., 2017). Hygiene factors refer to issues related to the work environment and how employers treat employees and their issues (Abdi et al., 2019). Herzberg defines motivational factors as factors directly affecting whether an employee is satisfied or dissatisfied with their job (Herzberg et al., 2017).

Motivational factors are dominant in job satisfaction compared to hygiene factors (Batool et al., 2021). Hygiene factors include salary, relationship with co-workers and supervisors and organisational policies, while motivational factors include recognition, job security and rewards (Nickerson, 2021).

Herzberg (2017) believed that job satisfaction dynamics differ from job dissatisfaction and may lead to low morale in the workplace. These factors include low wages, poor work environment, lack of work discipline, poor leadership and lack of information provided to employees to be effective at their jobs (Setiawan et al., 2018). These factors lead to a lack of worker commitment and employee morale. Setiawan et al. (2018) found that the development of employees through motivational factors is pivotal to employees deciding to be fully committed to the organization. Thus, an organization's lack of self-development might affect work climate and employee morale.

Practically, Herzberg's theory is appropriate for every single organization, and theoretically, it is similar to other needs-theories, like Maslow's Theory (Batool et al., 2021). Although Herzberg alludes to the importance of hygiene factors, he concludes that they do not contribute towards motivation, but lack of hygiene factors can lead to job dissatisfaction and ultimately to low work and employee morale.

## **2.5 Importance of high morale in the workplace**

The environment of an organisation is influenced by morale. It is necessary for a company's success because it reflects the members' attitudes and feelings concerning the organisation's goals and policies.

Worker morale is important, and this aspect directly influences employees' happiness, performance, efficiency, and work quality Ward et al. (2019). Positively inclined workers are more productive, provide better results, and stay in a company longer (Post, 2021). When the organization is in crisis, it will give everything it has to stay alive and accomplish its goals. (Picincu, 2019).

Many organisations can expect to experience a crisis; however, how an organisation deals with the crisis is really what counts. A crisis is an unforeseen event that can happen in any type of organisation, and at every level within the organisation, which

can have long-term effects on the existence of an organisation (Tanje et al., 2014). Therefore, it is important for an organisation to ensure that it can survive such an event. Surviving a crisis is far easier when morale is high. The team pulls together and works as one. Sacrifices are shared much more easily. Requests to employees are greeted not with anger and resentment but with understanding and willingness, and then creative ideas for improvement are brought forward (Tanje et al., 2014).

## **2.6 The importance of morale in farmworkers**

Morale amongst farmworkers, like employees in other industries, is very important. The morale of farmworkers is important because it will prompt them to want to achieve the organisational targets (Maican et al., 2021).

Morale is also important to ensure job performance among farmworkers (Anggraini et al., 2019). Should the job performance not be satisfactory, that means that the production will not be at its peak in terms of the goods required for the market.

Nowadays, agriculture is also facing shortages of labour (Karacsony & Vinichenko, 2021). Therefore, maintaining good morale amongst farmworkers will assist in retaining existing skilled workers and possibly attaching new skilled farmworkers.

## **2.7 Farming in South Africa**

South Africa has the most sophisticated, productive, and varied agricultural industry in Africa. South Africa has a highly-developed agricultural industry, which will serve the country well in the face of ongoing economic uncertainties (International Trade Administration, 2021).

The agricultural sector is being affected by climate change because temperatures in Southern Africa are rising faster than in the rest of the world (The Conversation, 2021). The extreme rise in temperatures and changing rainfall patterns affect crops productions. Farmers will be unable to yield the required quantities, which may cause food shortages. The most important crop for South Africa is the maize and wheat crop, not only for our local market but also for export. The temperature rise will also affect the fresh fruit and wine farmers, which bring the most foreign earnings into South Africa (Johnston, 2019).

There are two distinctions in the agricultural sector in South Africa's economy: smallholder farming and frequently subsistence farming. The other is the highly developed commercial farming, 87% of agricultural land is taken up by 40.000 commercial farms. The remaining 13% comprises almost two million smallholder or household farmers (Calzadilla et al., 2014).

## **2.8 Challenges facing farmworkers in South Africa**

Farmworkers generally refer to low-income workers, from working the soil to planting and harvesting. This includes those workers being compensated for time spent on other farming activities, like livestock care (Mathews, 2020). South Africa's social and economic conditions have continued to marginalise farm workers and perpetuate the vulnerable state of farm workers (International Labour Office. et al., 2007).

Below are some of the challenges that South African farmworkers face:

### **2.8.1 Working and living conditions of farmworkers in South Africa**

Farmworkers in South Africa are negatively impacted by the lack of transparency in wages, lack of service delivery, seasonality and migration of workers, whether voluntary or involuntary (Visser & Ferrer, 2015). Farm workers are vital to the economy and food chain, yet they are impoverished and prone to exploitation. Those farm workers that have been evicted, in particular, endure a problem of unemployment, poverty, and hunger that often goes unnoticed.

A slew of progressive regulations was enacted after 1994 to safeguard employees from exploitation and abuse. Farmworkers were seen as particularly vulnerable. As a result, they were given special protection under the Sectoral Determination for Farm Workers 13, which establishes legal standards for living and working conditions on farms, including the right to a minimum wage set by the Department of Labour every year.

The working and living conditions of farmworkers impacts their wellbeing, le Roux (2020) indicated that the wellbeing of employees has a direct impact on their morale levels.

### **2.8.2 Income**

Income is the money received for one's efforts (van Wyk & Dippenaar, 2017) The South African Multidimensional Poverty Index (SAMPI) presents a comprehensive assessment of poverty regarding income, inequality and poverty dynamics (Statistics South Africa, 2015). It zooms in on health, education, living conditions, and economic activity. Each dimension has characteristics that categorize a family as disadvantaged or not impoverished in that area. According to the SAMPI statistics from 2001 and 2016, 17.9% of families were multidimensionally poor in 2001, but this percentage dropped to 7% in 2016 (Department of Agriculture, 2022). Those farmworkers whose incomes are not in line with the Sectorial Determination are more likely to be affected in terms of their morale levels in the work place.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023, Minister of Employment and Labour Thulas Nxesi declared a 9.6% increase in the minimum wage for farmworkers (Republic of South Africa, 2023). Making the hourly rate for a 45hour week R25,42. Before this increase the hourly rate average R20,60 (WageIndicator, 2023). This increase safeguards farmworkers from extremely low wages.

### **2.8.3 Immigrant workers**

Farmworkers are predominantly in the low-income bracket; they do not have specialised skills and can be easily replaced and retrenched with little to no interventions. Matters are further complicated by immigrants with no proper documentation who reside in South Africa and have scarce skills that South Africa does not have. These immigrants flood the farms for even lower pay rates than South African farmworkers, thus affecting the job security of South African farmworkers (International Labour Office. et al., 2007).

Immigrants that are being paid at a lower income affect the hours worked by South African farmworkers who would like to be paid minimum wages as prescribed by the South African government that consequently affects their morale levels.

#### **2.8.4 Access to service delivery**

Access to service delivery refers to South Africans' access to basic services like water and electricity. In terms of service delivery in agricultural regions, about 15.8% of farm residences are informal, with an additional 16.4% of traditional housing types, whereas 83.1% of urban dwellers live in formal dwellings (Statistics South Africa, 2020). Access to improved water sources in farm regions remains lower, at 83.2%, compared to the South African average of 98.1%. This means that over 17% of people living in rural regions do not have adequate access to water sources (Department of Agriculture, 2022).

In terms of access to electricity, 82.0% of households in rural regions have access, compared to 94.5% of those in urban areas. Between 2019 and 2020, there was a 73% increase in access to better sanitation in farm regions, with 83.2% having improved sanitation (Department of Agriculture, 2022).

#### **2.8.5 Drought**

Droughts are the period in a country when there is abnormally dry weather, resulting in a lack of water spanning for a long period (Tomlinson et al., 2015). Every organisation care about its bottom line. In farming, farmers' profitability decisions are linked to the rate of return on assets (which looks at the farm's net income against the value of assets invested). When there is drought, the impact is felt in the bottom line, which impacts the decision-making process. South Africa is vulnerable to drought, which affects agriculture, given this industry's reliance on water (Meza et al., 2021).

The impact on the farming community is dire. With severe droughts, farmers reduce the weekly hours, ultimately affecting most workers appointed to production activities. For the permanent employee, where terms and conditions are more difficult to change, there is a loss of employment due to farming being under economic stress because of droughts, and the evictions also rise. Hence, drought seasons might impact farmers' living and working conditions and morale (Meza et al., 2021).

#### **2.8.6 Occupational health and safety**

A public health division called Occupational Health

and Safety (OHS) focuses on raising workplace health and safety standards. Farmers are employing different methods to limit pesticide exposure for farm workers working directly and indirectly with pesticides; after failing to provide sufficient safety equipment. According to the Human Rights Watch 2011 study, farmers will not offer lawful sick leave to the workers without acquiring a medical certificate, and they sometimes deliberately ignore farm workers' pleas for safety conditions. Farmers also refused to provide workers with toilet paper, hand soap, and drinking water while working, which is against the law (Department of Agriculture, 2022).

The farmers inability or unwillingness to provide for basic occupational health needs of their farmworkers may have a negative impact on morale of these workers.

### **2.8.7 Labour right violations**

A vast majority of farm workers are not aware of the current legal minimum wage rate. The permanent farm workers have more knowledge of it than the seasonal workers (Devereux & Soloman, 2019).

Gender discrimination was also discovered in the investigation by Human Rights Watch (2011). Farm workers employed permanently are often men. The women are often employed as seasonal workers and are often paid less than their male counterparts (Andrew, 2012). Pregnant women experienced prejudice, with farmers refusing to hire them and even firing them when pregnant. They were evading the legal requirement to provide maternity leave (Department of Agriculture, 2022).

Farm owners are also putting barriers in the way of farmworkers creating unions, convincing workers to resign from unions, and union members experiencing bad treatment from farm owners compared to non-union members (Department of Agriculture, 2022).

### **2.8.8 Housing, hygiene and sanitation**

The Humans Rights Watch (2011) reported to the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, in a sitting held on 25 March 2022, that their 2011 study showed that farms still lack of proper housing on farms. Dwellings were filthy and inadequate for safeguarding residents from the elements during the winter.

There is also a lack of washrooms and toilets at the farm workers' place of work; for instance, at vineyards in the Western Cape, farm workers need to use the bush because there are no toilets in close proximity (Devereux et al., 2017). This is extremely problematic for female farm workers. This violates their human dignity and is considered gender discrimination(Devereux et al., 2017).

### **2.8.9 Farm evictions**

A large number of farm workers have been evicted from commercial farms, thus losing their houses and full-time jobs and being hired back as seasonal or temporary employees (Devereux & Soloman, 2019). Farmers have exploited legislation designed to protect farm workers and inhabitants from eviction as a blueprint for lawfully removing agricultural labourers (Visser & Ferrer, 2015).

### **2.8.10 Farmworkers replaced by technology**

New technology may hasten the forcible eviction of farm workers. In commercial agriculture, mechanisation is already replacing employees. Certain tasks done by farm workers could not be automated until recently (Devereux & Soloman, 2019). This will result in farm workers being fearful and anxious about possible job losses, which could affect how they handle their daily tasks.

## **2.9 South African Legislation on farm workers**

The primary duty for promoting and protecting everyone's rights lies with the government. Furthermore, according to the Constitution, everyone has a right to fair labour practices. This right applies to all farm employees, whether permanent, temporary, or seasonal. As a result, the state has interfered with enhancing farm worker livelihoods in the agricultural sector by adopting laws managing the relationship between employers as producers or farm owners and farm employees as the labour force(The South African Human Rights Commission, 2003).

### **2.9.1 Sectoral Determination 13: Farm Worker Sector**

The government creates sectoral determinants to provide minimal conditions for the employment of agricultural workers to safeguard disadvantaged employees in a

certain sector. Since 2003, the government has issued Sectoral Determination 13 for Agriculture, which creates and controls the employment conditions for farm workers through the Minister of Labour. This Determination is legally binding and applies to all farming operations in the Republic, including the following:

#### **2.9.1.1 Minimum Wage**

All farm workers are to be paid a minimum wage which will be adjusted annually, which came to effect on 01 March 2006. In 2021, the minimum wage was set at R23,19 for each ordinary hour worked.

#### **2.9.1.2 Payment of remuneration**

An employer is to pay workers in South African currency based on the hours the employee has worked and as per the agreed frequency of such remuneration. This includes daily, weekly, bi-weekly or every month.

#### **2.9.1.3 Prohibited Acts Concerning Pay**

The employer has no right to withhold any portion of the employer's remuneration, and neither can an employee be expected to carry the cost of training for a specific job trade within the farm, whether internal or external.

#### **2.9.1.4 Deductions**

An employer may not make any deduction from wages without written permission, and deductions are to be no more than 10% for food and 10% for accommodation, where the food and accommodation are provided regularly and consistently.

#### **2.9.1.5 Ordinary Hours of Work**

An employer may not require or permit farm workers to work more than 45 hours a week; 9 hours if the farm worker works for five days or less in a week or 8 hours if the farm worker works for more than five days in a week.

Overtime is any work done that exceeds the above limits. An employer must pay workers at least one and a half times the farm workers' wage for overtime.

#### **2.9.1.6 Work on Sundays**

The hourly rate will double the normal rate when the farm worker works on Sunday.

### **2.9.1.7 Night work**

This is for all work performed after 8 pm and before 4 am the next day. This is all work performed after 8 pm and before the following day, and the farm worker must agree to this work and be compensated at least 10% of the ordinary hourly rate and transport made available if the worker works off-site.

### **2.9.1.8 Meal Intervals**

A farm worker is entitled to 1 hour of interval for every 5 hours of work; however, this can be reduced to 30 minutes through a written agreement between the employer and employee. It must be noted that if the employer works less than 6 hours a day, it may be agreed through written agreement to do away with the meal interval.

### **2.9.1.9 Rest period**

A farmworker is entitled to an interrupted 12 hours rest period and 36 hours uninterrupted weekly rest, including Sundays unless the employer and employee enter into an agreement stating otherwise.

### **2.9.1.10 Public Holiday**

No worker is required to work on a public holiday except under a written agreement.

### **2.9.1.11 Leave**

Farm workers must be granted at least three weeks' leave on full pay for each twelve months of employment. For sick leave, a worker is entitled to 1 day paid every 26 days worked. A farm worker is entitled to 4 months in a row maternity leave that can start anytime from 4 weeks before the birth date. An employer need not pay the workers for the period they are on maternity leave provided they can claim maternity benefits from the Unemployment Insurance Fund. Employees are not permitted to work six weeks after giving birth, unless the medical practitioner gives permission.

Farmworkers employed for four months and at least four days a week are entitled to a 3-day paid family responsibility leave every 12 months.

### **2.9.1.12 Freedom of association and political right**

As per the constitution, farm workers have a right to association and political rights like all South African Citizens of the country. Another violation of labour rights that is still happening is that some farmers do not allow farm workers to be part of a union.

## **2.10 Farm workers contribute to Sustainable Agriculture**

Farm workers contribute to Sustainable Agriculture; hence, they need to have high morale levels. Farm workers and their representation through trade unions and non-government organisations (NGO's) are critical to contributing to sustainable agriculture, food security and sustainable development. The purpose of sustainable agriculture is to fulfill society's current food demands without jeopardizing future generations' capacity to meet their own (Feenstra, 2021). Sustainable agriculture aims to achieve three key goals: a healthy environment, financial viability, and social and economic equality (Feenstra, 2021). In practice, the ideas of sustainable development, sustainable agriculture, and food security are comparable and overlap. Promoting food security and sustainable agriculture necessitates addressing the same concerns (International Labour Office. et al., 2007). Farming is critical to the economy and agriculture's long-term viability. It ensures food security, among other things; thus, farmworkers' dedication is important to be well engaged in their jobs. It is, therefore, vital to improving their morale.

### **2.10.1 Improved health, safety and environmental standards**

Good farmers understand the importance of reducing accidents and ill health among their employees and the financial and other benefits of achieving and maintaining high health and safety standards. A sustainable agricultural business requires a high level of health and safety, which should be considered an integral aspect of farm management (Devereux, 2020).

Farm workers contribute to tackling occupational hazards in their working environments by promoting integrated production and the management of pest management chemicals (International Labour Office. et al., 2007). Farm workers are the ones who work the land and ensure animal husbandry. The farm worker also must comply with the processes they have been trained on. The farm worker becomes an "agent" for promoting these processes to co-workers, thus ensuring standards agreed upon are upheld (International Labour Office. et al., 2007).

### **2.10.2 Food security**

At the 1996 World Food Summit, it was decided that for everyone to live a healthy and active life, they must always have physical and financial access to enough food that is safe, nourishing, and meets their dietary needs (World Food Summit, 1996). Between May/June 2020 and April/May 2021, about 34% of respondents that took part in the NIDSCRAM survey that lived in homes with children reported child hunger once, and nearly a third reported family hunger. According to these findings, 13.4 million people in the NIDSCRAM survey experienced hunger in their homes at least once (Patel & Bridgman, 2021).

In addition, from September to December 2020, 9.34 million people in South Africa (this amounts to 16 percent of the population studied in the IPC food security analysis) experienced severe acute food insecurity, necessitating immediate action to close food gaps and preserve livelihoods. Eight of South Africa's nine provinces, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Gauteng, North West, Free State, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, and Western Cape, were classed as Stressed (IPC Phase 2), requiring immediate action to preserve livelihoods, while Kwa-Zulu Natal Province was designated as Crisis (IPC Phase 3). The COVID-19 epidemic and mitigation efforts, as well as rising food prices, drought, and economic downturn, all contribute to South Africa's poor food security (IPC, 2021).

The agriculture industry is critical to increasing food availability and ensuring food security (Pawlak & Kołodziejczak, 2020). Farm workers play a major role in food production and ensuring that food insecurity risk factors are reduced (International Labour Office. et al., 2007).

### **2.11 Conclusion**

This chapter presented information related to the phenomena of morale in the workplace. The purpose of the literature review was to understand the various aspects of the workplace that can affect employees' morale. Various factors such as remuneration, work environment, recognition, interpersonal relations, promotion opportunities and job security affect an employee's morale.

The information from this chapter has formed a base for the formulation of interview questions for the study participants and assisted in answering the study's objective. The research methodology employed in this study will be explained and examined in the next chapter, with special emphasis on the research design, sampling technique, data collecting, data analysis, and research ethics.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research design, sample design and size, data collection process and ethical considerations. The research approach employed for this study is described in this chapter. The selection of participants and a review of the data collection techniques will make up the framework of this chapter. The last section will summarize the techniques used to analyse the data and test the study hypotheses.

### **3.2 Research Philosophy**

The orientation of the research study followed a qualitative approach to gather the participants' opinions. The research study followed an epistemological interpretivism paradigm. According to Bryman et al. (2014), epistemology relates to what is or is considered adequate knowledge in a discipline. The study's objective is to get sufficient knowledge from participants chosen as the study's appropriate audience. The interpretivism paradigm as employed to help the researcher interpret the participants' viewpoints. Interpretivism is the term for capturing the subjective meaning of social activity (Bryman et al., 2014). Therefore, the study's angle involves understanding the farmworkers' viewpoints on the factors that affect their morale.

### **3.3 Research Design**

The proposed study adopted the qualitative research design, which aimed at understanding the meaning people or groups ascribe to human or societal problems or phenomena using non-numerical data (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The interviews took an average of 30-45 minutes, using an interview guide in Appendix A.

The qualitative research design used in the study was phenomenological since the research subject was interpreted from the eyes of those who directly lived the experience (Bryman et al., 2014). Thus, the personal insights of the participants on the research matter were harnessed.

### **3.4 Population**

A population is every person or every entity which could be included in the research. It defines the scope of a research study and offers the reader environmental and contextual information (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). The Dihoai Chicken Farm has 30 employees; however, only 25 farmworkers from this population will be interviewed as a sample. The sample population interviewed comprised male and female farmworkers 18 years and older.

#### **3.4.1 Sampling**

Sampling is a method of selecting a sample from an individual or a large group of people to conduct research (Bhardwaj, 2019). The following section focuses on the sample size and the sampling method used in this study.

##### **3.4.1.1 Sample size**

A sample is a collection of people, things, or items selected for measurement from a larger population (Bhardwaj, 2019). The recommended sample size for qualitative research interviews is 20 – 30 respondents (Malterud et al., 2016). For this study, the sample size was 25 respondents.

In qualitative research, data saturation is a key concept. It is used to identify when a research's data is sufficient to produce a solid and reliable knowledge of the topic under study (Faulkner & Trotter, 2017). The sample size is 25, and the researcher interviewed participants until data saturation was reached and when there was no longer new data being received from the interviews.

##### **3.4.1.2 Sample methods**

The selection of participants was made using non-probability sampling. Since the sample required participants to respond to the research questions, purposive sampling was preferred. Purposive sampling is the deliberate choice of participants due to the qualities of the participant and is a non-random technique (Etikan, 2016). Since the study intends to identify factors affecting farmworkers' morale at Dihoai Chicken Farm, the researcher needed to allocate farmworkers willing to participate in providing information based on being practically involved in the farm.

Included in the study were farmworkers that tend chickens. These are the farm workers that feed and weigh the animal on the farm. They also record all the animals, examine them to detect diseases and injuries and administer vaccines, medicine and insecticides. Also included are farmworkers that maintain the chicken houses and other areas and collect, wash and package the eggs. Excluded in the study are workers who are not directly involved in the farm's bird husbandry and office staff.

### **3.5 Data Collection Method**

The research method for collecting the participants' perceptions followed semi-structured interviews, allowing for probing and exploring the subject matter (Bryman et al., 2014). An Interview Schedule (see appendix A) was developed to guide the discussions and partially structure the conversations. Each interview begins with obtaining some demographic information from the participants. The researcher kept records of the relevant characteristics, allowing the researcher to make certain inferences regarding the study. The demographic questions were followed by questions relating to the factors in the workplace that may influence employee morale.

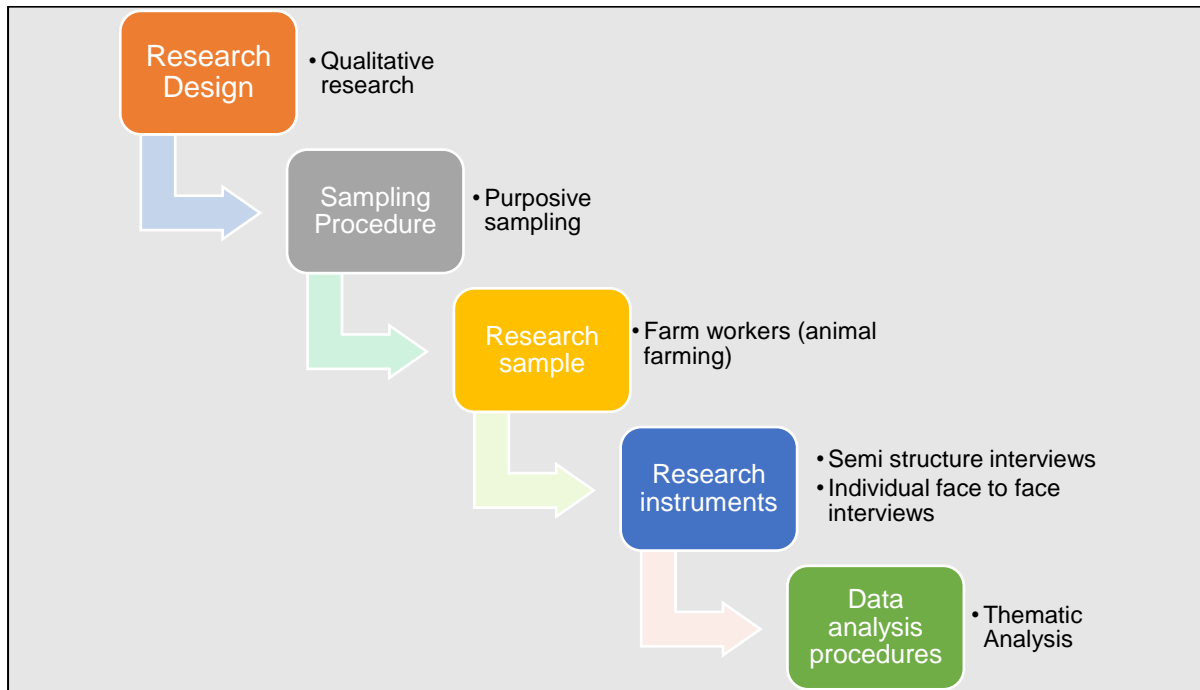
The participants were probed based on their responses to gain further insights into their opinions. Interviews were conducted one-on-one because dealing with an individual can allow the researcher to delve deeper and focus on personal matters (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017).

The sample population is farmworkers, whom the researcher believed would be best suited for face-to-face interaction rather than an electronic self-administered survey. The face-to-face interviews were in the form of semi-structured open-ended questions to allow elaboration from the interviewee.

The method of analysis utilised in the study is thematic analysis, which allowed the researcher flexibility in that it does not bond the researcher to specific rules; instead, the personal experiences of each farm worker interviewed were of the most importance. These experiences expressed by the participants assisted in providing a deeper understanding of the topic.

Language barriers might pose a challenge; therefore, the questions were translated into the local language of Welkom, Sesotho. The interviews were 30 - 45 minutes long per individual at a convenient time for the employees.

Figure 1 depicts the research design, and methodological approaches followed:



**Figure 3: Research design and methodological approach**

### **3.6 Recruitment Strategy**

Permission was sought from the company regarding conducting interviews. Once this permission had been secured, the participants were interviewed at the workplace. Those farmworkers concerned with animal husbandry and the upkeep of the stables were selected from the list provided by the organisation.

The researcher travelled to the town, where management introduced the researcher and explained the study to the farm workers. The researcher stayed for a few days at the farm to ensure the completion of the data collection. These interviews were done as soon as permission from the ethics committee and the organisation was received.

### 3.7 Data analysis

The narrative thematic analysis was used to analyse information obtained from the participants (Bryman et al., 2014). This analysis entails extracting themes from the participants' replies and organising the participants' thinking around those emerging topics. (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Identifying fundamental thinking patterns within participants' replies is crucial for deducing significant signals from the interviews. In this study, the researcher discovered themes on the important elements influencing farmworker morale.

### 3.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are a collection of principles that govern a researcher's study designs and procedures in research (Arifin, 2018). When gathering data from individuals, scientists and researchers must always follow the rules (Bhandari, 2021). Accordingly, permission was sought from the University of the Free State's Research Ethics Committee. Next, consent to conduct this research was requested from the company, especially to interview their farm workers. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study to get their signed voluntary consent to participate in the study (Arifin, 2018).

- **Harm to participants:** Any harm, psychological or physical, was avoided to guarantee the safety of participants (Arifin, 2018).
- **Breach of confidentiality:** The potential risk of breach of confidentiality arising from the data collected was mitigated by signing a confidentiality agreement. The researcher signed a confidentiality agreement with the participants to secure their legitimate privacy and confidentiality protection rights. The participants' identities were kept private, and confidentiality was strictly adhered to. Codes and/or pseudonyms were assigned to interviewees and research sites to protect identities.
- **Loss of work time:** The appointments with the participants were scheduled when convenient for each participant. The scheduled times within working hours were communicated with supervisors and management for approval.

- **Negative impact on professional/personal relationships:** Farm workers that may be afraid of damaging relationships with the management by being honest about factors that affect their morale were reassured that such information would be treated with the strictest confidence. Hence, a confidentiality agreement was signed with each participant.
- **Reputation harm:** The organisation's management and the owner may be afraid of damaging relationships with their stakeholders, but they, too, were assured that information would be treated with the strictest confidence to ensure it does not leak out to third parties. Hence, the confidentiality agreements.
- **Conflict of interest:** refers to situations in which a researcher's professional judgment in doing or reporting research is harmed or seems to be harmed by monetary or other personal concerns. There is no conflict of interest in the case of this research because the researcher does not work for the company where the study took place.
- **Vulnerable participants:** are people who cannot fully consent to participate in a study, i.e., minors and persons with diminished mental capacity. Participants in this study were of sound mind and could give full consent. Because of the language barrier, the consent form was explained to them before signing.

### 3.9 Demarcation of the study

The research study consolidated the perspectives of the farmworkers of Dihoai Chicken Farm in Welkom, relating to the factors that affect their morale. This research study is classified under human resources because it deals with the well-being of farmworkers. Due to time and financial constraints, the study was limited to 25 participants drawn through purposive sampling.

### 3.10 Conclusion

As indicated at the outset of this chapter, the research design lays out the framework for gathering, measuring, and analysing data for this study. This chapter describes the technique and research strategy employed in this study to address the research questions. The research study followed an epistemological, interpretivism paradigm

and a qualitative research approach. The selected sample approach is non-probability sampling. Individual interviews were used to perform the research. The procedures and sample size were chosen for this study to obtain data from the participants.

## **Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter detailed information relating to the research methods that have been undertaken for this study, which respond to the research question on the morale of farmworkers at Dihoai Chicken Farm in Welkom. The main objective of this chapter is to present the analysed data collected from semi-structured interviews conducted to determine farmworkers' perspectives on factors affecting their morale at work.

This chapter further evaluates the experiences and responses of 25 farm workers. This chapter's data originates from interviews with farmworkers at Dihoai Chicken Farm in Welkom, Free State. The chapter discusses the factors that affect the morale of these farmworkers, and, lastly, recommendations are made based on these experiences.

The research applied thematic analysis, which allowed the researcher to thoroughly scrutinise data to identify emerging patterns across the data set after considering similar or common experiences from the participant's responses.

### **4.2 Data analysis procedure**

The data was collected from semi-structured interviews. All interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis with each participant at the farm. During the interviews, questions were posed to participants and translated where necessary. Following each interview question, the researcher transcribed answers on an answer sheet for data coding and analysis. Coding gives each data segment a label that simultaneously classifies, summarises, and explains it. Coding is the initial stage in developing analytical interpretations of the data once specific assertions in the data have been made (Charmaz, 2006).

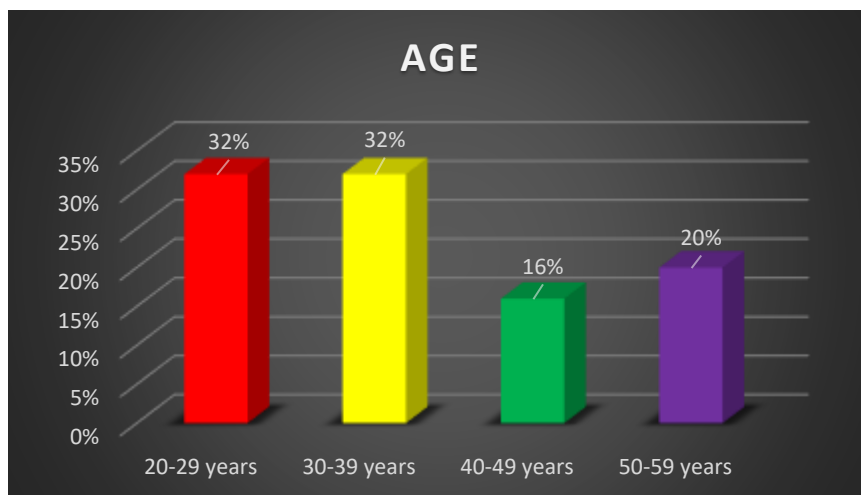
The emerging patterns and messages were interpreted following the thematic analysis of the coded participants' perspectives. These patterns were preserved within the subjective views to retain their original meaning. The subsequent section outlines the interpretation of the analysis made and supports the arrangement of the semi-structured interview schedule.

### 4.3 Biography of participants

The study sample involved 25 Dihoai Chicken Farm farmworkers. The researcher managed to interview all 25 participants. The profiles of all participants involved in the semi-structured interviews are deliberated on in this section. The profiles covered the age of participants, gender equity, and whether they were breadwinners or not in their respective homes.

#### 4.3.1 Age of participants

Figure 4 and Table 1 represent the age groups of the study participants. The bar graph shows that most of the participants (n= 8, 32%) were in the age group of 20 to 29 years; equally, 32% (n= 8) of the participants were in the age group of 30-39 years, while 20% (n= 5) were between the ages of 40 and 49 years. Only 4 participants (16%) fell in the age category of 50 to 59 years. The youth age in South Africa is anyone between the ages of 15 and 34 (Statistics South Africa, 2022). The data collected demonstrates that 44% of the participants were in the youth category. The details regarding the age and number of participants are illustrated in figure 2 and table 1 below.



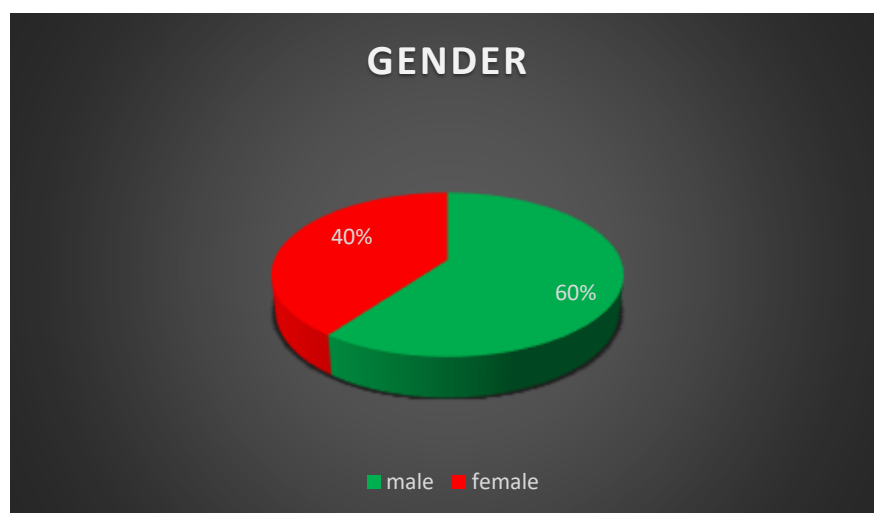
**Figure 4: Age of participants**

**Table 1: Age and number of participants**

Age	Number of participants	Percentage (%)
20 – 29 years	8	32%
30 – 39 years	8	32%
40 – 49 years	4	16%
50 – 59 years	5	20%
Total	25	100%

#### 4.3.2 Gender of participants

Figure 5 and Table 2 illustrate the categories of the gender of the study participants. It indicates that 60% of the respondents (n= 15) were males, while 40% (n=10) were females.



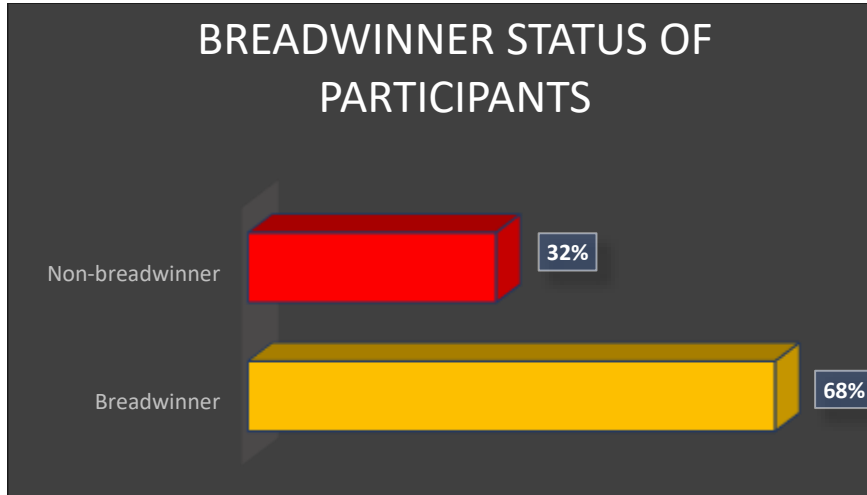
**Figure 5: Gender of participants**

**Table 2: Gender of participants**

Gender	Number of participants	Percentage (%)
Male	15	60%
Female	10	40%
Total	25	100%

### 4.3.3 Breadwinners

Figure 6 and Table 3 below show that 68% (n=) of participants were breadwinners, while 32% (n=) were non-breadwinners.



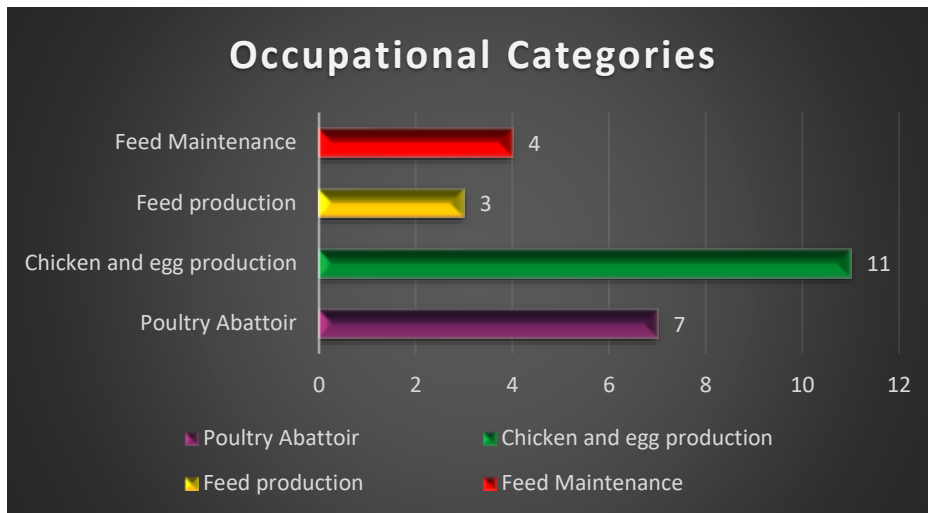
**Figure 6: Details of breadwinners**

**Table 3: Breadwinner**

Breadwinner (Y/N)	Number of participants	Percentage (%)
Yes	17	68%
No	8	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 4.4 Occupation categories of farmworkers at Dihoai Chicken Farm

While conducting the interviews, the researcher asked the participants to give daily examples of their work on the farm. From the responses, the researcher identified four categories of duties that apply to Dihoai Chicken Farm. Figure 7 and table 4 depict the different categories, the number of participants interviewed from each category and the duties of the farm workers working in each category:



**Figure 7: Occupation Categories**

**Table 4: Summary of Duties Per Occupational Category**

Occupational categories	Duties
<b>Poultry Abattoir</b>	Moving and managing the animals before and after slaughtering.
	Removal of feathers and internal organs.
	Trimming carcasses and moving to freezers.
	Boning, slicing and packaging meat.
	Processing of by-products.
	Cleaning machinery, knives and abattoir floor.
<b>Chicken and egg production</b>	Checking that the chickens have access to food and water.
	Walk around the chicken house looking for ill or injured chickens.
	When entering and departing dwellings, adopt strict biosecurity standards.
	Control the temperature of the housing for maximum bird comfort.
	Maintain the home and the watering/heating system as needed.
	Control house illumination to satisfy the demands of chickens.
	Maintain strong animal welfare standards.
	Assist with egg collecting, washing, and sorting on layer farms.
Assist with the packaging of the eggs.	

<b>Feed production</b>	Ensure that basic preventive maintenance chores such as lubricating bearings, checking gearboxes, and inspecting/tightening belts are completed daily, weekly, and monthly.
	Assist with repair and maintenance projects with the maintenance team. Assist in increasing the mill's efficiency.
	Filling micro-ingredient boxes and cleaning up ingredient bins as needed.
	Collaborating with staff to identify and solve ingredient flow concerns.
	Ensuring the feeds are put into bags.
	Ensuring feeding orders are loaded onto trucks.
	Ensure that the company's safety procedures are followed.
	Receive ingredients into the mill, both bulk and bagged.
	Grading the ingredients received.
<b>Farm maintenance</b>	Routine maintenance check on all equipment, chicken houses and watering and heating systems.
	Minor repairs on other structures as well as the fences.
	Loading and offloading stock coming into the farm and-double checking if it is correct.

#### 4.5 Theme's related to morale of the farmworkers

Emanating from the data gathered, the following themes were developed as per the semi-structured interviews conducted:

**Table 5: Themes and sub-themes**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
4.5.1 The Farm	4.5.1.1 Service to the farm
	4.5.1.2 Best and worst period of the year for farm work
4.5.2 Attitudes towards farm work	4.5.2.1 Attitudes towards farm work
	4.5.2.2 Difficult work tasks
	4.5.2.3 Attitudes towards other occupations
4.5.3 Remuneration	4.5.3.1 Rewards and recognition
	4.5.3.2 Employee benefits
4.5.4 Job security	4.5.4.1 Retrenchments

	4.5.4.2 Unemployment
4.5.5 Work relationships	4.5.5.1 Work-life balance
4.5.6 Physical working environment	4.5.6.1 Resources
	4.5.6.2 Infrastructure and pest control
4.5.7 Health and wellness	
4.5.7 Training and development	
4.5.8 Recommendations from participants	

## 4.5.1 The farm

### 4.5.1.1 Service to the farm

The participants taking part in the study were asked about how long they have been working for the organisation and how many hours they work per week.

The years worked ranged from 6 months to 10 years, and the hours worked per week ranged from 32 to 58 hours per week.

Part-time farm workers usually work 8 hours daily, four days a week. Among the permanently employed farm workers, some work five days a week and others seven days a week. Among them, some work the night shift only. Emanating from the participants' views, the researcher established that those working the night shift generally worked longer hours than those working the day shift. The night shift staff, work an extra 1- 2 hours a day, especially if they living on-site.

Below are the views of some of the participants:

Participant 3 *"I live on site. My work day starts at 4:30 in the afternoon until 4 in the morning, every day."*

Participant 9 *"I have worked for the farm since 2013. I work 8 hours a day for 5 days."*

Participant 12 *".... 5 years, part-time. I work for 8 hours a day for 4 days."*

Participant 14 *"Worked 8 years on and off. I work 8 hours a day, 5 days a week."*

Participant 24 *"I all week, for 8 hours a day."*

From the comments above by the participants, the researcher noted an inconsistency in the working hours of the farm workers depending on their occupational category and the shift they work. The hours worked by employees directly affect their productivity levels and morale. The farmworkers that worker longer hours than others felt over worked and their morale levels appeared to be much lower than those who worked fewer hours.

#### **4.5.1.2 The best and worst period of the year for farm work**

The participants were then requested to express which periods in the year they enjoyed working in the most and which period they found to be difficult to work.

From the responses, 11 participants (44%) preferred the summer, 9 participants (36%) preferred the winter, and 6 participants (24%) had no preference. Emanating from the participants' views, it was established that the farm workers working in the abattoir preferred the winter because the smell was manageable, and there were fewer insects and less meat contamination. The farm workers in the chicken and egg production houses preferred the summer as far as favourable production is concerned; however, the houses can get uncomfortably hot in the summer. The farm maintenance workers preferred the winter because they found it more difficult to work in the heat. The feed production workers had no particular preference.

Below are some of the views of the participants:

Participant 1 *“The summer, as the production in the summer goes well.”*

Participant 5 *“.... prefer the winter, the smell in the abattoir is manageable....”*

Participant 22 *“The summer gets very hot, and doing hard labour in the heat is difficult.”*

It is also important to understand why they choose these periods, and if there is something the management can do to make things easier, then management can request should be recommended. If not managed, it can affect the organisation's motivation, morale, overall productivity and profitability

## 4.6 Attitudes toward farm work

The participants were asked to raise their views on farm work. The following themes were identified from their responses:

### 4.6.1 Enjoyable work tasks

The researcher asked participants which tasks they enjoyed most about farm work.

The views of the participants were as follows:

Participant 6 *“I like farm work because I grew up on a farm, and that is all I know, and I enjoy looking after the animals.”*

Participant 16 *“.... Planting crops. I enjoy contributing to the ability for people to have food on their tables.”*

Participant 24 *“.... I love working with the animals....”*

The participants' views illustrate that they enjoy the kind of work they do. The reasons vary from loving animals to the familiarity of farm work because of growing up on a farm to realising the importance of farming for food security. Although participants demonstrated the love of the work that they do, it cannot be explicitly deduced whether it affects the morale of farmworkers.

Similarly, to enjoyable tasks, the participants were asked what they found most difficult about farm work. The researcher noted that the most difficult tasks for the employees were dealing with disease breakout, animal mortality rate, and little rest, especially for farm workers who live on-site and have to attend to emergencies.

Below are the views of the participants:

Participant 10 *“.... When production is low. Also, when there are a lot of mortalities with the chickens.”*

Participant 13 *“The hard labour, with little rest.”*

Participant 15 *“Containing a disease breakout amongst the chickens. Keeping watch for sickly chickens.”*

Participant 24 *“In farming, even if I have knocked off. When there is an emergency at the farm with the chickens, I have to go and attend to it.”*

The responses show that there are duties that prove difficult for farm workers. It is important for management to take note of them so this can be managed, as it can lead to high levels of absenteeism and negatively affect morale.

#### **4.6.2 Feelings toward other occupations**

The participants were asked to express their feelings towards people in other occupations and the reason for that. From the responses, 18 participants (72%) had no feelings toward people in other occupations, and the remaining 7 participants (28%) did.

Below are the views of the participants:

Participant 1 *“No feelings. We are all just employees.”*

Participant 4 *“None. I focus on my own work because work is scarce.”*

Participant 7 *“Do not respect people in corporations. We do hard labour, and we deserve to get well paid just like them.”*

Participant 16 *“No, each job has its own advantages and disadvantages.”*

Participant 20 *“Yes, I do. I feel like others see their work as more important, and we are looked down upon.”*

The above responses illustrate some farmworkers seem to have negative feelings towards other occupations, while others seem to suppress their feelings and others do not really care all that much.

#### **4.7 Other occupational interests**

The researcher then asked participants if they were interested in doing something else if they stopped working at the farm-what kind of work they see themselves as qualified for.

Below are the views of the participants:

Participant 8 *“I could work in brick manufacturing. I am qualified for any factory work.”*

Participant 12 *“...I could be a domestic worker. I am qualified for food production and vegetable ploughing.”*

Participant 18 *“.... cleaning jobs. Not qualified, I only studied up to standard 6.”*

It can be noted from the responses that there are other jobs in the area that they could do should they find themselves no longer doing farm work.

#### **4.8 Remuneration**

The participants were asked to raise their views on whether they could make a living through farm work. This question is based on the remuneration they are earning. The following are the sub-themes emanating from the participant's responses:

##### **4.8.1 Reward and recognition**

While discussing the remuneration, the participants were further invited to raise their views about the reward and recognition system of the organisation. Emanating from the views of the participants, it was then established that the organisation applies a reward and recognition system selectively as some of the employees were offered vouchers for a job well done while others were not; even though they would have reached targets they were not rewarded nor recognised for their job well done.

Below are the views of the participants in this study.

Participant 3 *“The type of work we do on the farm is hard and a lot, but we do not receive recognition.”*

Participant 16 said, *“I feel demotivated because my efforts are not fully recognised/rewarded.”*

Participant 22 also emphasized that *“I always put a lot of effort in my work and because I live on site and I assist when there is a need for extra work to be undertaken and emergencies; however, despite that, I receive no reward nor recognition.”*

Therefore, it can be noted from the above quotes that the farm workers are not happy when it comes to rewards and recognition. This might affect their morale as the literature states that job satisfaction can be affected by factors such as remuneration, the nature of the tasks, working conditions, rewards and recognition (Fernández-Macias & Muñoz de Bustillo Llorente, 2014). Job satisfaction is a key factor in boosting the morale of employees, which the latter can be attained through a reliable reward and recognition system employed by the organisation (Kwabena Anin et al., 2015).

#### **4.8.2 Employee benefits**

Apart from not receiving reward and recognition as outlined above, the participants further raised serious concerns regarding the non-provision of employee benefits such as medical aid as well as a pension fund, especially when they retire; the participants are of the view that the organisation should consider reviewing the current remuneration package such that employee benefits are also embedded.

Below are the views of the participants:

Participant 16 said, *“I strongly believe that our salaries must be increased; we must be provided medical, UIF and pension fund.”*

Participant 21 cited that *“our financial well-being must be considered; in other words, the organisation must increase salaries, make provision for pension fund and subsidy for medical aid.”*

Participant 25 further reiterated that *“the organisation should offer medical aid, bonus and recognition.”*

The above remarks by the farmworkers show that they are not pleased with the fact that they do not have employee benefits, which could affect their morale. The objective of employee benefit programs is to enhance employee’s capability for a sustainable living, improve employee’s quality of life and provision for healthcare needs (Sastera & Mauludin, 2018)

#### **4.9 Job security**

The participants were asked whether they feel secure in their jobs, and below are the sub-themes that the researcher noted from their responses:

#### 4.9.1 Retrenchments

The participants also raised their opinions on the current challenging economic conditions and high unemployment in the country and the province. Despite these daunting conditions, 22 participants (88%) felt secure in their jobs because their tenure ranged from 2 to 10 years. Contrary to this, two participants appointed on a part-time basis lacked job security because they felt dispensable. This sense of job security was similar to the one participant with the least experience in their unit.

#### 4.9.2 Unemployment

According to (Statistics South Africa, 2022), the unemployment rate for the Republic of South Africa was 33,9% in the second quarter of the 2022 financial year. The results continue to demonstrate that youth remain vulnerable in the labour market, as the unemployment rate for youth stood at 46.5% in the second quarter of the 2022 financial year. Consequently, linking the unemployment rate with the views of the participants in this study, there were mixed feelings about unemployment as some participants were anxious that they might lose their work should similar circumstances as COVID-19 occur in the near future, while others were optimistic that they may not lose their job owing to the number of years of experience they have in farming.

Below are the views of the participants:

Participant 16 *“Given the high unemployment, I do not feel secure workwise because people continue losing their jobs.”*

Participant 19 *“There are a lot of job losses amid COVID- 19 because it negatively affected the farms' production.”*

Participant 20 *“I fear losing my job as a number of former colleagues lost their jobs, especially during COVID-19.”*

Participant 10 *“...I have been working here for a long time, and I help train the new farm workers that come in, and nothing has ever given me the feeling that I can lose my job.”*

The participants' responses show that the farm workers' job security level differs for various reasons. According to (Kraimer et al., 2005), job security is a mental state in which employees differ in their possibilities of job security in an organization, as it comes with a sense of protection from retrenchment, unfavourable economic conditions, and other variables that might damage their employment.

#### **4.10 Work Relationships**

When asked about the relationships with colleagues in other divisions on the farm, the farmworkers revealed that generally, there is a good working relationship amongst the farm workers, as 23 described it as good or excellent. At the same time, the remaining 2 participants indicated the work relationships are not good. It is worth mentioning that the 2 participants who said the working relationships are not good are employed part-time.

Below are the views of the participants:

Participant 20 *“We work well together on the farm; we have even become friends.”*

Participant 6 *“The relationships are good; we all help each other here at work; some of us have even become friends.”*

The above illustrates that farm workers have good work relationships and work well together. Good relations can boost morale because the calibre of our professional interactions affects our capacity for personal growth and is likely to heighten our sense of accomplishment. Healthy, positive relationships are one of Seligman's five pillars of authentic well-being (2011). Relationships the most important source of life satisfaction and well-being (Reis & Gable, 2003) .

##### **4.10.1 Work-life balance**

Stemming from relationships, farm workers were asked if they wished they would see more of their friends and family and if they felt a good balance in their lives. The researcher also asked participants what they like to do in their spare time.

Subsequently, in terms of the current study undertaken, it was established that the participants residing on the farm felt that they had less work-life balance because there is no distinction between when their work day ends and their time to rest begins.

However, contrary to that, the participants that stay off-site clearly distinguish when their work ends and their time to rest begins.

The participants also use their spare time to do a lot of activities: maintaining their vegetable gardens, relaxing with friends and selling goods to make extra money.

The views of the participants that live on-site are as follows:

Participant 8 *“I live on the farm, so if some issues come up, I have to drop everything and go and assist.”*

Participant 22 *“I would like to see more of my family. I live on the farm and work more than I rest.”*

Likewise, the views of the participants that live off-site are as follows:

Participant 10 *“I see my family daily after work and my friend once a month. I have a good work-life balance.”*

Participant 17 *“I see enough of my friends and family and have a good balance.”*

It can be noted from the responses that there some farm workers have a good work-life balance and some less of a work-life balance depending on whether they reside on-site or not, and there are times when work demands intrude into other aspects of a farmworker’s life and this effects the morale of these farmworkers because they feel over worked; thus, according to related literature, work conditions are increasingly getting stressful (Agha et al., 2017). Stress has huge implications for the employee's life, including their health, by affecting the immune system, blood pressure, feelings and emotions.

There is a work-life balance when time and energy are divided between work and other important life activities. It implies that the employee can do a good job while still finding time for community involvement, friendship, family, personal development, spirituality, self-care, and other things needed for a successful life (Meenakshi et al., 2013).

#### **4.11 Physical working environment**

The farmworkers were then asked to express how the physical work made them feel and if they felt that there were enough resources available to them to perform their job. Below are the sub-theme coming from their responses:

#### **4.11.1 Resources**

The study outlined that generally, the participants operate in a conducive work environment as there are sufficient tools of the trade that enable them to perform their duties efficiently. It was also established that there are certain units of the farm, such as the abattoir, where every one of the participants working in this highlighted the shortages of knives as well as malfunctioning overhead conveyer system as obstacles in their daily functioning (Ogbonnia, 2021).

The views of the participants are noted below:

Participant 5 *“Abattoir does not have enough equipment, such as knives and a de-feathering machine.”*

Participant 14 *“There are not enough knives.”*

From the quotes above, it can be noted that the farmworkers felt the availability of the tangible tools of the trade plays a pivotal role in achieving organisational targets. Setiawan et al. (2018), as indicated in Chapter 2, emphasised that tools of the trade are vital in enabling employees to execute their duties diligently without any hindrances.

#### **4.11.2 Infrastructure and pest control**

The infrastructure and other concomitant facilities, such as ablution blocks and secured fences, were areas the participants were extremely delighted about regarding a conducive physical outlook. No participant complained about these aspects, as the farm was well maintained and the roads and grass were looked after.

##### **4.11.2.1 Pest control**

In terms of pest control, most of the participants in the abattoir responded that there are challenges regarding pests, especially in the summer. This should be managed appropriately as it could have dire consequences in their efforts to reduce meat contamination.

The views of the participants are articulated below:

Participant 6 *“I prefer working in winter since I work with fresh meat; there are less chances of contamination and less smell.”*

Participant 16 *“.... winter there are fewer flies and ants; we work smoothly in that season.”*

From the responses, it can be deduced that the farmworkers are happy with the infrastructure at the farm. However, there is an issue of pests that may need to be given attention, especially at the abattoir.

#### **4.12 Health and wellness**

The Dihoai Chicken Farm farmworkers are also not immune to any healthcare issues that any other person could experience. Consequently, when the participants were asked in which ways they believe the type of work they undertake affects them, the following were most prevalent: headaches, losing temper, back pain, intense tiredness, worrying as well as drinking and smoking more than usual.

Moreover, participants were requested to list other ways they believe farm work affects their well-being;

- Foot pain due to long hours of standing
- Feeling demotivated due to career stagnation
- Frustrated about not being employed on a full-time basis after years of service to the farm
- Lonely and homesick.

Following the uniqueness of the working environment, farm workers are exposed to various biological, physical, and chemical variables that are hazardous to their health. Furthermore, due to restricted access to healthcare and lesser health knowledge, farmer workers frequently do not have such good health status as other occupational groups (Żukiewicz-Sobczak et al., 2013).

#### **4.13 Training and development**

The farm workers were asked to share how the training provided by the organisation made them feel.

The participants had the following to share with regard to training and development:

Participant 19 *“I prefer formal training where I will receive a formal certificate. This will be empowering. We are forever in in-service training by fellow colleagues with experience.”*

Participant 21 *“I feel happy with the in-service training provided; however, I wish that we could have more formal training.”*

The responses by participants show that although the organisation offered training to employees, the participants raised concerns that they were not satisfied with the type of training offered, which is in-service training. The participants outlined their preference as formal training wherein they could obtain certificates that can be used for future job endeavours. The literature supports this by noting that; employee training and development helps organizations and employees achieve wide-ranging goals, such as improving morale, a sense of security, employee engagement, and overall skills necessary to perform a particular job (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017).

#### **4.14 Recommendations from participants**

In the final theme, the participants were asked what suggestions they had to improve farmworker morale at the organisation. The majority of the participant ( n=17, 68%) highlighted that an increase in salaries would help improve morale. They also noted that rewards and recognition ( n=12,48%) would improve morale. The staff also noted that they would like to have the farm owner address them once in a while to iron out issues and feel he was too aloof and avoids direct interaction and contact with them. Things like the introduction of employee benefits, uniforms and employing part-time staff permanently were also some of the recommendations made by the farm workers.

#### **4.15 Conclusion**

The chapter broadly presented the findings from the empirical data collected through semi-structured interviews by the researcher with participants at Dihoai Chicken Farm

in Welkom. The main objective of this study was to investigate factors affecting farmworkers' morale at Dihoai Chicken Farm, Welkom. The information gathered from all participants was presented and analysed guided by nine (9) themes as well as twelve (12) sub-themes which were interconnected to enable the researcher to outline morale issues as well as to sketch out possible recommendations that Dihoai Chicken Farm could employ to develop strategies to enhance the morale of farm workers.

The chief findings from the study were that most of the participants acknowledged their dissatisfaction with their salaries and employee benefits; the participants felt that the salaries that they are earning are too little to cover the current cost of living; this is exacerbated by the fact that they do not have a subsidy for medical aid nor provision for a pension fund and the Unemployment Insurance Fund. Furthermore, the organisation's lack of a reliable reward and recognition system leaves most employees feeling unappreciated.

Notwithstanding the participants' dissatisfaction with salaries and employee benefits, the participants have a fairly high level of job security; their working relationships are also sound as there is always in-service training offered by co-workers that help develop good relationships and collaboration. The other aspect that may positively boost the participants' morale is the general conducive working environment which is further enabled by the sufficient tools of the trade.

Furthermore, the participants raised other mixed feelings regarding the work-life balance as some of the participants residing on-site expressed their dissatisfaction as there is no clear distinction between work time and their time; however, there were other participants that live on site who felt that the time away from friends and family allow them to focus on their farm work. The participants not residing on-site felt they had a good work-life balance as they could visit friends and family regularly. Lastly, the participants indicated that they suffer from health issues, headaches, backaches, and intense tiredness. The nature of work also causes them to worry, lose their temper and start drinking and smoking.

The next chapter will identify and discuss the findings from the data presented in Chapter 4. The discussion will establish a link between the data collected and the

literature. Based on this, suggestions will be made on possible strategies to enhance the morale of farm workers at Dihoai Chicken Farm, Welkom.

# **Chapter 5: Summary of Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion**

## **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter explored the experiences of the farmworker relating to the factors affecting the morale of farm workers. To achieve the aim of the study, the following objectives were stated in Chapter 1 of this study:

Primary objective:

- i. Investigate factors affecting farmworkers' morale at Dihoai Chicken Farm, Welkom.

Secondary Objective

- i. To conduct a literature review on staff morale (Chapter 2)
- ii. To determine strategies to enhance the staff morale of farmworkers at Dihoai Chicken Farm, Welkom.

The researcher conducted an extensive literature review on morale, factors affecting morale, morale theories, the working environment of farmworkers and policy direction for farmworkers in South Africa. Semi-structured interviews followed the literature review to collect data from 25 Dihoai Chicken Farm, Welkom participants. This was carried out to understand the farmworkers' perspective on the factors that affect their morale. The data collected was transcribed and analysed using thematic content analysis. This chapter discusses the main findings of the research and presents some recommendations.

## **5.2 Summary of Findings**

### **5.2.1 Factors affecting farmworkers' morale at Dihoai Chicken Farm, Welkom**

The study's main objective was to identify the factors affecting the morale of farmworkers at Dihoai Chicken Farm, Welkom.

The results from the study found the following factors:

### **5.2.1.1 Remuneration**

From the data, the researcher noted that most of the farmworkers at Dihoai Chicken Farm were concerned about their salaries and how they did not cover their basic needs. Remuneration is the first and the most important physiological need in the Maslow Hierarchy of Needs (Uysal et al., 2017). The Herzberg Dual Function theory also identifies remuneration as the most important hygiene factor in helping minimize employee dissatisfaction (Nickerson, 2021). This concern was heightened among some of the younger farmworkers, who were even more concerned that they were not receiving subsidies for medical aid and the absence of a provision for pension funds and UIF. The lack of a reward system to compensate for the low salaries was also a sore point for the farmworker. Some even alluded that management saw the salary they paid them as a reward for their hard work. Remuneration and employee benefit positively influence employee motivation and morale (Anggraini et al., 2019).

### **5.2.1.2 Physical work environment**

The data showed that although the farmworkers were unhappy with the remuneration package, the views from all the participants expressed satisfaction with the farm's physical work environment, citing the availability of ablution blocks, showers, clean water and a generator as a motivation to diligently execute their respective duties. Herzberg's Dual Function theory identifies the physical work environment as a primary hygiene factor that keeps employee dissatisfaction at bay (Nickerson, 2021). The majority of participants also expressed their happiness with the availability of the tools of the trade required to do their work efficiently. The availability of fully functional equipment and tools to do one's job has a bearing on one's level of motivation (Parashakti et al., 2020).

### **5.2.1.3 Job security**

The farm workers at Dihoai Chicken Farm generally felt unsafe in their jobs. The recent retrenchments that took place during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic left a lot of farmworkers weary and concerned about the safety of their jobs and their ability to fend for their families should a situation similar to COVID-19 occur. This concern was prevalent among the participants who were breadwinners in their respective families. A study by Chirumbolo (2015) states that job security is a function of job satisfaction.

#### **5.2.1.4 Work relationships**

Most participants expressed that they have good work relationships with colleagues; some even described it as excellent. Some in their interviews noted that their colleagues had become their friends. This could also result from farmworkers' reliance on each other for assistance in their work, and they train each other within the various units. The relations could also be good because some of the farmworkers who are not originally from Welkom live on-site, so they spend considerable time with each other. The literature states that organisational group dynamics and employee relationships are fundamental in achieving organisational goals and boosting morale (Myeni, 2010).

#### **5.2.1.5 Recognition**

The participants expressed that they do not get recognition for their work or the extra strides they make after the workday. This is especially true for the on-site participants who felt that their work-life balance is further compromised because whenever the need arises, they are expected to drop everything in the case of an emergency. No consideration is made that their work day has ended. This affects their motivation levels and general well-being because it is mostly the farmworkers that live on site that noted "drinking and smoking more than usual" as an effect of their farm work. Similarly, Kwabena Anin et al. (2015) note that employee job satisfaction is affected by the rewards and recognition they receive from managers and peers.

#### **5.2.1.6 Training and development**

A vast majority of participants were happy about the in-service training they received upon arrival at the farm. However, they also expressed the desire to have more formalised training. According to Travieso (2013), self-actualisation is the ultimate level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs and is achieved through promotional and specialised training opportunities for employees.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The findings show that there is an issue with the remuneration; therefore, the organisation should consider reviewing the remuneration package to include employee benefits were possible. It should also work on introducing a robust reward system that will bridge the gap between the salaries of the farm workers. The

organisation must focus more on exercise because remuneration is the most important of all the physiological needs of an employee.

Also noted in the findings as part of the recommendations that the farmworkers put forward to improve their morale was engagements with farm management and farm owner. Management of Dihoai Chicken Farm should create clear lines of communication; this will assist employees in receiving feedback and guidance and provide an opportunity and a platform for employees to share their thoughts and for management to practice active listening. This will assure employees that they are important to the organization. When communication is transparent, employees comprehend management decisions better, even if those decisions are not to their advantage. When employees are kept in the dark about what is going on in the organization, it can lead to gossip and backbiting.

What also came out in the findings is the lack of work-life balance, especially for farmworkers living on-site. Therefore, Dihoai Chicken Farm's management should consider the farm workers' work-life balance when establishing shifts and allocating duties. A lack of a good work-life balance could be one of the reasons for the increase in absenteeism, as noted in Chapter 1 the organisation is experiencing. Overworked employees will burn out, which can result in low morale of the workers.

The findings also showed dissatisfaction with the absence of recognition at the organisation. The researcher proposes that the organisation introduces a well-managed recognition programme. An effective recognition program will reward employees for their work and assist in creating and encouraging peer-to-peer appreciation. The act of both recognizing and being recognized will boost everyone's morale.

Training and development efforts seem to be the organisation's lowest priority. Dihoai Chicken Farm should consider introducing a training and development program because it will assist the farm workers in acquiring new skills and sharpening existing skills, performing better and increasing productivity. When employees sense that their employers are helping them improve their skills and knowledge base, they feel motivated, increasing job satisfaction and morale. The organisation is the total of the farm workers' efforts, and it is therefore important and beneficial to the organisation to assist and ensure that the farm workers are performing at their peak.

The above recommendations address the study's secondary objective, which is to determine strategies to enhance the staff morale of farmworkers at Dihoai Chicken Farm, Welkom.

#### **5.4 Limitations Of Study**

The study was only conducted at Dihoai Chicken Farm, Welkom, Free State. The information gained from the study was based on the opinions and perspectives of the selected participants; therefore, generalisation is not possible as the effects contributing to morale could differ from farm to farm and province to province.

#### **5.5 Recommendations for Future Research**

The study was conducted at one organisation, one location, and with twenty-five selected participants. The researcher recommends that the scope of the study be extended to include other farms in different locations and that more participants be included in the sample.

The study was qualitative, and the researcher suggests using quantitative and mixed methods for future studies to include statistical data on the subject matter.

Similarly, future research can assess whether there is a correlation between the seasons and the effect they have on farmworkers' morale. Future research can also delve into how difficult tasks undermine the positive effects of enjoyable tasks and how morale is maintained during difficult times. Due to the complexities of the subject, not all elements influencing agricultural worker morale were considered in this study. Therefore, the researcher recommends focusing on other factors, such as external factors that affect farm workers' morale.

#### **5.6 Conclusion**

The literature review in Chapter 2 provides the conceptual underpinning for this study. The literature also supported the empirical inquiry and corresponding recommendations.

The positive morale of employees in each organisation is critical as it is closely related to key factors such as staff engagement, work satisfaction, and employee retention,

which in turn will affect the organization's overall productivity or performance. Consequently, from the study undertaken at Dihoai Chicken Farm in Welkom, it was interpreted that the participants were satisfied with the physical work environment and tools of the trade and had good work relationships with other colleagues. These factors positively impacted the respective morale of the participants at the farm.

Contrary to the positive responses raised morale, most participants were concerned about their salaries and how they did not cover their basic needs. Furthermore, participants felt they do not get rewards and recognition for the work done irrespective of their efforts, even beyond normal working hours. The participants equally raised concerns about the lack of provision of formal training in the organisation.

The researcher's recommendations emphasized the need for the organisation to review remuneration packages, introduce a reward and recognition program and training and development program, all of which will have cost implications for the associated organisation. Equally, the implementation of these recommendations over time will result in improvements in farmworker morale.

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# Appendix A: Interview Schedule

## Appendix A: FARM WORKER

### SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The purpose of the interview is to test your opinion on the factors that affect your morale.

Please note that it is anticipated that the interview should take approximately **30-45 minutes**.

Demographic Info / Lesedi ka wena	
Age? Dilemo	
Gender? Bong?	
Are you the breadwinner in your household? Ke wena mofepedi o le mong lapeng?	

1. <u>Section 1: The farm / Polasi</u>
1.1. How long have you been working here? O na le nako e kae o sebetsa mona?
1.2. Give me an example of the work that you do on the farm on a day-to-day basis. Mphe mohlala wa mosebetsi oo le o etsang polasing letsatsi le letsatsi.
1.3. How many hours do you work a week? O sebetsa dihora tse kae ka beke?
1.4. What periods of the year do you enjoy working the most? [Why?] Ke dihla dife tsa selemo tseo o thabelang ho sebetsa haholo ka tsona? [Hobaneng?]
1.5. When are the most difficult periods of the year for you? [Why?] Ke dihla dife tsa selemo tse thata / boima ka ho fetisa ho wena? [Hobaneng?]

1.6. Do you feel secure in your job? O ikutlwa o bolokehile mosebetsing wa hao?

1.7. How does training provided by the organisation make you feel about the organisation? Thupello eo mokgatlo o fanang ka yona o etsa hore o ikutlwe jwang ka mokgatlo?

**2. Section 2: Feelings towards the occupation / Maikutlo ka mosebetsi wa hao**

2.1. Do you work on other farms in addition to this one? Ana o sebetsa mapolasing a mang o kenyeletsa le ee?

2.2. What do you enjoy most about farm work? Ke eng seo o se ratang haholo ka mosebetsi wa polasi?

2.3. What do you find most difficult about farm work? Ke eng eo o e fumanang e le thata boima haholo ka mosebetsi wa polasi?

2.4. How does the physical working conditions in your organisation make you feel? O ikutlwa jwang ka maemo a tshebetso ka hara mokgatlo wa hao?

2.5. Do you feel that there are enough resources available to you, in order for you to perform your job? Maikutlong a hao, na o nahana hore ho na le desebediswa tse lekaneng hore o ka phetha mosebetsi wa hao hantle?

2.6. Do you think you have a different attitude to people in other occupations you know about [e.g. shopkeepers, doctors, vets]? Na o nahana hore o na le mohopolo o mong ka batho mosebetsing e meng eo o e tsebang (Mohlala: barekisi, dingaka, dingaka tsa diphoofofo)

2.7. Why do you think that is? O nahana hore ke hobaneng ha hole jwalo?

2.8. If for any reason you had to stop doing farming work, is there employment available locally that you could do? Haeba ka lebaka le ha e le lefe o ka tlameha ho kgaotsa ho etsa mosebetsi wa polasi, ana ho na le mosebetsi o fumanehang sebakeng sa heno o ka o etsang?

2.9. What sort of work do you see yourself as qualified for? Ke mosebetsi wa mofuta ofe o ka o tshwanela?

### **3. Section 3: Relationships / Dikamano**

3.1. What do you do in your spare time? O etsang ka nako ya hao ya phomolo?

3.2. How often do you see friends and family not connected with the farm in an average week or month? Ke hakae o bonang metswalle le ba lelapa ba sa hokahaneng le polasi ka beke kapa ka kgwedi?

3.3. Would you like to see more of friends and family or do you feel you have the right balance? Oka rata ho bona metswalle le ba lelapa kapa o ikutlwa onale botsitso bo nepahetseng?

3.4. What about relationships with colleagues in other divisions on the farm? Okareng ka dikamano le basebetsi-mmoho dikarolong tse ding tsa polasi?

### **4. Section 4: Health / Bophelo bo botle**

4.1. Do you think farming affects you in any of the following kinds of ways? Na o nahana hore polasi eo ama ka e nngwe ya ditsela tse latelang?

- Lack of sleep /Ho hloka boroko
- Headaches /Hlooho e opang

- Loosing temper/irritability /Ho fela pelo/ ho teneha
- Feeling down /Ho ikutlwa o le fatshe / o hloname
- Back problems /Mathata a mokokotlo
- Intense tiredness/ Mokgathala o kenelletseng
- Problems relaxing/ Mathata a ho phomola
- Forgetfulness/Ho lebala
- Problems concentrating /Mathata a ho tsepamisa maikutlo
- Worrying /Ho tshwenyeha
- Low energy /Matla a fokolang
- Drinking more than usual / Ho nwa ho feta tlwaelo
- Arthritis /Ramatiki
- Smoking/smoking more than usual/Ho tsuba/ho tsuba ho feta tlwaelo

4.2. Would you say that farm work affects your general well-being in any other ways that I have not mentioned? Na o ka re mosebetsi wa polasi o ama bophelo bo botle ba hao ka kakaretso ka ditsela tse ding tseo ke sa kang ka di bolela?

#### **5. Section 5: Finance and reward /Tjhelete le ditlhapiso**

5.1. Are you able to make a living from the farming work? Ana o kgona ho iphedisa ka mosebetsi wa polasing?

5.2. Do you feel that you are rewarded and recognised for a job well done? O kgotsofetse mabapi le ditlhapiso le ho ananelwa ha o sebeditse hantle?

#### **6. Section 6: General / Kakaretso**

6.1. Other than what is mentioned above, what other factors affect how you feel about your organisation and the work you do? Ntle le tse boletsweng ka hodimo, ke maemo a feng a nang le tshusumetso maikutlong a hao ka polasi le mosebetsi wa hao?

6.2. What suggestions do you have to improve employee morale at you organisation? Ke tlhahiso kapa tshisinyo e feng eo o nahanang hore e ka ntlafatsa morolo wa basebetsi bakeng sena seo o sebetsang ho sona?

## Appendix B: Permission from the Organisation



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Unit 15, Wonderkop Farm  
Welkom 9459  
2011/007881/24

Contact: 072 245 5280  
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### Permission to conduct research

Please note that Ms. Sithandile Modiroa a student at the University of Free State's Business School, has the permission of the Dihoi Chicken Farm to conduct research at our Welkom facility for her study, "Moral of farmworkers at Dihoi Chicken Farm, Welkom".

Ms Modiroa will be provided information regarding employee breaks, for her to utilise the time to recruit farmworkers to participate in her interviews.

Kind Regards

  
Mr D. Mphuthi

CEO

## Appendix C: Ethical Clearance Approval



### GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

17-Oct-2022

Dear Mrs Sithandile Modiroa

#### **Application Approved**

Research Project Title:

**EMPLOYEE MORALE OF FARMWORKERS AT DIHOAI CHICKEN FARM, WELKOM**

Ethical Clearance number:

**UFS-HSD2022/1096/22**

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Adri Du Plessis**

**Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee**

**Adri  
Du  
Plessis** Digitally  
signed by Adri  
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