

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR WOMEN SMALLHOLDER-FARMERS
TRANSFORMING INTO COMMERCIAL FARMERS, LEJWELEPUTSWA
DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY: FREE STATE**

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that the field study hereby handed in for the qualification Master's 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.

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ABSTRACT

Smallholder farmers play a crucial role worldwide in food security and economic growth. The study explores the transformation of women who are smallholder farmers to become commercial farmers, focusing on the Lejweleputswa District Municipality, Free State. However, women smallholder-farmers encounter numerous challenges that hinder the process. The study investigates inhibiting factors and identifies success factors that can accelerate transformation.

Qualitative research was employed to gather data in the study using semi-structured interviews. The methodology employed assisted the researcher in discovering why women smallholder-farmers transform to become commercial farmers, the challenges inhibiting transformation, and the success factors contributing to successful change. Recommendations are made based on the results obtained during the interviews. These include doing due diligence with regards to lack of natural resources. As well as women smallholder farmers establishing and creating value chains in the area where they live. Furthermore, the study recommends that both the formal markets and women smallholders should enter into memorandum of understanding in terms of the specifications of agricultural produce. Results showed that more still needs to be done to avail resources and provide access to markets to transform women in smallholder farming to commercial farming.

Keywords: smallholder-farmers, commercial farming, commercial farmers, contract farming, cooperatives, Extension Services, access to the markets, resources, agricultural organisations, value chains, farm diversification.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|--|
| AFASA | : African Farmers Association of South Africa |
| CF | : Contract Farming |
| CSA | : Climate-smart Agriculture |
| CVF | : Commercial Vegetable Farming |
| DAFF | : Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries |
| DARD | : Department of Agriculture and Rural Development |
| DRDLR | : Department of Rural Development and Land Reform |
| FAO | : Food and Agriculture Organisation |
| ICT | : Information and Communication Technology |
| NDA | : National Department of Agriculture |
| SEDA | : Small Enterprise Development Agency |

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

(United Nations, 2022: 15) reported global human population to have reached 8.0 billion in mid-November 2022 from the predicted 2.5 billion people in 1950, adding up to 1 billion people since 2010 and 2 billion since 1998. It is also expected that the world's population could grow by nearly 2 billion persons in the next 30 years, from the current 8 billion to 9.7 billion in 2050, and could peak to nearly 10.4 billion in the mid-2080s. Moreover, the World Bank Poverty overview (2022) states that the number of people in extreme poverty increased by 70 million to more than 700 million in 2019 due to the COVID-19 crisis. Despite this, United Nations' Sustainable Development target is to end poverty in all its form by 2030 (United Nations-Department of Social Affairs, n.d.)

Locally, (Department of Planning, 2014: 63) announced that around 1994; 17 million people were estimated to reside mainly in the former homelands. At the time, 70% of the rural population was categorized as poor with high unemployment levels.

Additionally, an earlier report by (Statistics South Africa, 2001: 7) revealed that 42.5% of the country's population, translating into 21 million people, called the rural areas their home. However, as revealed by Statistics South Africa, the population was estimated to be 60,14 million people, of which 51,1% (approximately 30,75 million) are reported to be female.

In addition, (Statistics South Africa, 2014: 13) reported that more than one out of every five adults (20,6%) were living below the food poverty line. Based on the survey, it becomes evident that adult females experienced higher levels of poverty when compared to their male counterparts, regardless of the poverty line used.

With the view to address the issue of poverty, (National Planning Commission, 2013: 218) 's National Development Plan 2030 vision involves improved integration of the country's rural areas; realized through successful land reform, infrastructure development, job creation, and poverty alleviation. Consequently, the agricultural sector is seen as the main employer of people in rural areas and can assist the poor understand how they can make use of agriculture to eradicate poverty.

(Ampaire Edidah et al., 2013: 61) highlights that the development of smallholder farmers becomes crucial in enhancing rural development. Smallholder farmers are entrenched in rural livelihoods, as such, enhancing their viability could serve to reduce rural poverty, improve food security and nutrition at different levels, and contribute to the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)(Fan & Rue, 2020: 14)

A report by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO 2010/11) states that approximately 80% of the world's food is provided by smallholder farmers. Women make up on average 43% of this agricultural labour in developing countries. Furthermore, they produce 20 to 30% less than male farmers because they encounter constraints related to their gender. Gender inequality is both the cause and effect of food insecurity, as women's contributions go unpaid and unnoticed. (Webb, 2021 n. p). Similarly, women smallholder farmers experience the burden of juggling multiple responsibilities and also face systematic prejudice in land rights and political representation (ActionAid International, 2011:3). The study intends to highlight the critical success factors for women smallholder transforming into commercial farmers with the specific reference to the district of Lejweleputswa in the Free State Province of South Africa.

2. Background

DALRRD (2016) states that agriculture is considered a cornerstone of developing countries. In South Africa, the agricultural sector is one of the predominant economic sectors and provides opportunities for large, small, emerging, and commercial farmers. According to Statistics South Africa (2019), the total income earned in the agricultural sector and related services was R351,4 billion in 2019. Large enterprises contributed R211,3 billion; small enterprises contributed R78,8 billion. Micro and macro enterprises contributed R31,9 billion and R29,1 billion respectively.

Smallholder farmers contribute significantly to the economy of the country. For this reason, world agriculture in the following decades will require major changes to accommodate the increasing demands of a growing and progressively more wealthy urbanised population. In developing countries, smallholder farmers play a key role in food security and economic growth. However, smallholder farmers have also become increasingly vulnerable to emerging climate, health, price, and financial risk. Not only

do these shocks jeopardise an already fragile food production system, but the mere likelihood of their occurrence makes some smallholder farmers more risk-averse. This means that they will likely pursue more subsistence-orientated farming, allowing poverty to persist (Fan & Rue, 2020:13).

Similarly, several factors confront women in their attempts to participate in agriculture, where society can benefit hugely from the contribution they could put into the sector. Factors constraining their efforts take into account socio-cultural and economic problems they face at home and in society. Over and above, women contribute tremendously to agricultural production, but unfortunately, they rarely benefit from agricultural incentives and innovation (Ugwu, 2019:4).

1.2 Challenges facing women smallholder-farmers

1.2.1 Access to agricultural information

One of the obstacles facing women farmers is access to information and training, primarily due to a lack of mindfulness and gender disparities. Additionally, illiteracy impacts agricultural production as this leads to wrong decisions about farming practices (Ugwu, 2019:5).

1.2.2 Climate change

Global food production is affected by current extreme weather patterns (Zselezky & Yosef, 2014). Due to this phenomenon, factors such as long-term food insecurity, lack of resources, and heavy reliance on climate-dependent agriculture have exposed vulnerability in smallholder farmers (Harvey *et al.*, 2014).

1.2.3 Price spike and volatility

Price volatility and spikes have affected both producers and customers. Reasons for increased prices include the diversion of crops for biofuel, extreme weather events, low grain stocks, and panicky trade behaviour. The magnitude and direction of the impact on smallholder farms depend on several elements such as whether input costs increase, whether the farmers are buyers or sellers of food, the extent of any off-farm income, and the capacity of the farmer to step up production and bring the increased output to market (Anríquez *et al.*, 2013).

1.2.4 Access to markets

A complex set of factors impacts smallholder farmers' entry to lucrative markets. The involvement of these farmers in current market streams improves their income. However, participation is driven by a blend of land and non-land assets, with diverse findings on the role of farm size in determining the extent of participation. Non-land assets include rural infrastructure (such as road access and irrigation), cooperative memberships, education access, modern market participation of nearby farms, and rural non-farm employment. Additionally, lack of information (regarding price, supply and demand, and quality standards) leads smallholder farmers to face higher prices from opportunistic middlemen and traders, as well as lower market participation (Hernandez & Reardon, 2012).

Challenges such as those mentioned above deny women smallholder farmers the opportunity to participate in markets that could see them commercialising. The scarcity of women in commercial farming could be improved through empowerment schemes from the government. The following are examples of the respective schemes:

- Institutes that offer financial assistance to smallholder farmers are commercial banks, the Land Bank, Local Economic Development, provincial departments, and National Development Agency (NDA).
- By 2030, the National Development Agency (NDA, 2017) intends to ensure that one million hectares are utilised for crop, fruits, and livestock production, availing superior breeding animals to nominated smallholder and subsistence farmers.
- The government has come up with different grants to assist farmers. Such are:
 - The Comprehensive Agricultural Support Program (CASP) aims to provide supporting services to previously destitute landowners to promote and facilitate farming. CASP program supports smallholder farmers with infrastructure development such as the development of boreholes, construction of animal structures, and acquisition of production inputs.
 - Illima is a grant to assist farmers with crop production such as sunflower, maize, beans, potatoes, and other crops. It includes production inputs, mechanization, fertilizers and pesticides, irrigation, and harvesting.

- The Department of Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry recognizes and rewards the role played by outstanding women in agriculture through the Female Entrepreneurship Awards Program.

The field study was undertaken in the District Municipality of Lejweleputswa in the Free State Province (South Africa). The district comprises five municipalities: Nala, Tswelopele, Matjhabeng, Tokologo and Masilonyana. Figure 1.1 indicates the geographical scope of the study:



Figure 1.1: Lejweleputswa District Municipality (Source: municipalities.co.za)

The study sampled participants from each district municipality. Lejweleputswa accounts for almost a third of the Free State province, with approximately 18 towns distributed throughout the district. Key economic sectors are construction, mining, transport, trade, and electricity.

3. Problem Statement

Commercialisation of smallholder farmers through increased participation in output markets has been promoted as one of the best strategies to address low agricultural productivity. Low productivity has led to high levels of poverty and reduced food security among rural households in developing countries. Though these initiatives aimed to open up new market-led opportunities for economic growth, their results were mixed in most countries. Even to date, many smallholder producers continue to engage in subsistence agriculture and thus cannot benefit from commercialisation opportunities presented by the opened market (Muricho, 2015 n. p).

Moreover, Johnson *et al.* (2016) state that value-chain agricultural development strives to place smallholder farmers in the commercial chain from input providers, to growers, to millers, processors, and retailers. This system shifts subsistence agriculture to farming for economic output, with an emphasis on global export. However, compared to men, women are systematically excluded from agricultural output markets in African countries south of the Sahara.

The above challenge for women in commercial farming consolidates the need for a process; the process of commercialising smallholder farmers is fundamental to fulfilling agricultural supply to meet demand. Growth in the agricultural sector relies on correcting interregional inequalities and enhancing factors such as obtaining credit, equipment, and agricultural inputs (yield increase, seeds and machinery) (Pingali *et al.*, 2019:172).

3.1 Research Questions

This study focuses on the following research questions:

- Why have women smallholder-farmers not participated in commercial farming?
- What are the inhibitors preventing long-term women smallholder-farmers transforming to commercial farming?
- Which factors are critical for transforming women smallholder-farmers into commercial farming?

3.2 Research Objectives

Research objectives are outlined below, starting with a primary objective, followed by secondary objectives.

3.2.1 Primary objective

The study's primary objective is to identify critical success factors that contribute to the transformation of women smallholder-farmers into commercial farmers.

3.2.2 Secondary objectives

The secondary objectives of the study are: to outline why women smallholder farmers need to transform to commercial farming; to investigate constraints that prevent the

transformation of women smallholder farmers into commercial farmers; to define the success factors contributing to the transformation of women smallholder farmers into commercial farming.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study's findings will benefit society, considering that more adults and children experience hunger daily in South Africa. With the high unemployment rate in the country, more and more households are struggling to make ends meet. The great demand for food justifies the need for the empowerment of women farmers to participate in commercial farming and contribute to the value chain of the agricultural sector. Thus, women farmers who adopt the study recommendations will improve their food production and, in return, stand a chance to access formal markets.

For the researcher, the field study results will reveal important aspects to be considered for women in the farming sector that other researchers have not noted. Thus, a new theory on women smallholder-farmers could be proposed.

1.6 Research Methodology

Research methodology is the technique used to solve problems. It is the discipline of learning just how research is managed systematically (Mishra & Alok, 2017:3). The methodology used in this study reflects an epistemological consideration and features an interpretivism approach.

1.6.1 Epistemology consideration

(Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020: 41) defines interpretivism as an approach where the researcher needs to respect the differences between people and the objects in their natural environment, focusing on understanding human contributions to the system. This approach allowed the researcher to see the farming industry through the selected participant's eyes to acknowledge their work and contribution from a benevolent perspective.

1.6.2 Research design

To be able to answer questions posed by the researcher, the success of the field study research depends on the research strategy and the link to the research objective/s. Bryman and Bell (2016:100) define research design as a plan used by the researcher to manage the application of research methods and carefully examine the seceding data. This field study adopted a qualitative and inductive research approach, as it offers different ways of collecting data, such as semi-structured interviews.

Qualitative research was deemed appropriate for the study as it manages to envelop a variety of methods for gathering and analysing data about the thoughts, attitudes, observations, and understandings of individuals and groups in different contexts (Sovacool *et al.*, 2018:18). Through the interviews, research participants were given a chance to freely discuss their perspectives on the field study questions without any interference from the researcher.

Bryman and Bell (2016:11) define the inductive approach as moving from specific to general, with the theory being the outcome of the research. For instance, the researcher draws general conclusions from the observations. The authors further state that inductive research uses grounded theory to create a theoretical understanding of participants' descriptions used to narrate their understanding of the social world.

1.7 Sampling Strategy

Sampling refers to a subset selected from a population. According to Bryman and Bell (2016:177), strategies for selection may be underpinned by probability sampling and non-probability sampling.

1.7.1 Study population

A population refers to individuals with one or more characteristics of interest. According to Alvi (2016:10), the population can be described as members who meet the specific benchmark identified for a research inquiry. For this reason, the sample for the study has been taken from the population of women smallholder farmers in Lejweleputswa.

1.7.2 Non-probability sampling

The study employed non-probability sampling. Benefits associated with this type of sampling include cost effectiveness, consuming less time, and its practicality, if there is a small population from which to draw the sample. Due to the high costs associated with data collection surveys, coupled with a low number of responses, the researcher opted for non-probability sampling to create an in-depth description of the population sample.

Etikan *et al.* (2016:1) regard non-probability sampling as a procedure, where study samples are identified and participants in the population are not chosen at random. Additionally, Etikan and Bala (2017:1) explain non-probability sampling as a technique that will not offer a basis for any opinion of probability and that elements in the universe will not have an equal chance to be included in the study sample.

1.7.3 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling was employed for the study because the method allowed the researcher to handpick cases. In addition, participants chosen for the study presented particular qualities that were regarded as appropriate to the study undertaken (Stommel & Wills, 2004:303). In other words, this method offered an understanding of the research questions and also helped to convince the audience of the importance of the study.

In addition, Emmel (2013) explains that the strength of purposive sampling lies in a thorough examination of the information offered by rich cases, learning more about research questions and factors considered to be of great importance to the researcher. The method entails determining and choosing people or individuals with excessive knowledge about the study who are readily available and willing to share life experiences and ideas in a well-spoken, meaningful, and thoughtful way.

The study further employed maximum variation sampling to allow fairness when collecting data from participants. (Etikan *et al.*, 2015:3) describes maximum variation sampling as a technique of choosing candidates across a wide spectrum relating to the topic of study.

The researcher approached the chairperson of AFASA (African Farmers Association of South Africa) in Lejweleputswa to access the database of women smallholder farmers with the names, contact details, farm names, town, young/adult, and farmer category (subsistent/smallholder/commercial). Permission was also granted for the researcher to utilise this information.

Furthermore, out of the population of 48 women smallholder-farmers in the Lejweleputswa District Municipality, fifteen participants from different commodities were sampled. Participants were purposefully chosen based on their availability and varied elements concerning age, commodity farmed, type of farm ownership, and area of operation. Ten semi-structured questions were prepared as the data collection instrument and one-on-one interviews were conducted.

1.7.4 Inclusive and exclusive criteria

Inclusive criteria

- Women farming within the vicinity of Lejweleputswa District Municipality
- Both adult and youth (from 18 to 35 years of age) women farmers
- Women taking part in farming any commodity
- Businesses owned by single women farmers or those involved in cooperatives
- Women operating as smallholder farmers

Exclusive criteria

- Women not currently active in farming

1.7.5 Sample size

Bryman and Bell (2016:177) stresses the importance of sample size in the following manner: the larger the sample, the more representative it is likely to be. However, the authors warn that the researcher might not get accurate results even if the sample size is increased. Leedy (1997:210) agrees that generalization might disadvantage the researcher, specifically in situations where a researcher has to make practical decisions with regards to specific situations. Nonetheless, it surely increases the

possibility that the sample is representative and reduces sampling error. In qualitative research, for the sample size to be justifiable and unbiased with open-ended questions, the method relies on data saturation.

1.7.6 Data saturation

According (Fusch & Ness, 2015:1), data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study when there is no new information coming forth, and further coding is no longer necessary. For the purpose of the study, the researcher used her discernment to cease collecting data as it became evident that no additional 'new' data was offered by participants.

1.8 Data Collection

Data collection is a specific, organised gathering of information applicable to the study, making use of interviews, participant observations, narratives, focus group discussions, and case histories (Burns & Gove, 2003:373). The researcher employed semi-structured interviews for data collection.

1.8.1 Semi-structured interviews

Wilson (2014:24) describes semi-structured interviews as critically gathering data on the topic at hand while permitting some investigation into new matters or themes when they appear. Additionally, semi-structured interviews offer a range of options structured to address specific topics related to the study questions, while allowing participants to provide new meaning to the study focus Galletta (2014:24). The author further adds that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to use discretion on the volume and sequence of questions to pose to the participant. This method includes open-ended and close-ended questions that can offer both quantitative and qualitative data.

The researcher set up 15 appointments with women smallholder farmers and conducted one-on-one interviews with them at the farms where they live and work. Five women were from Matjhabeng Municipality (Virginia & Welkom), four were from Tokologo Municipality (Hertzogville & Boshof), and four were from Masilonyana Municipality (Verkeerdevelei & Brandfort). One farmer was from Nala Municipality

(Bothaville) and one was from Tswelopele Municipality (Hoopstad). The researcher also had to drive between municipalities – journeys taking 30 minutes to 2 hours – to conduct interviews of 1 to 1,5 hours with each participant. Interviews were a collaborative exercise carried out with participants' consent. All interviews were conducted in Sesotho, which is the mother-tongue language of the participants. Transcripts in the form of audio recordings were done in Sesotho, translated into English, and referenced to summarise data.

Participants were recruited by personal emails obtained from data from the association of farmers. In addition, follow-up telephone calls were made to ensure that they had received the emails. Some participants gave consent to the interviews by responding to the interview request emails, while others gave permission telephonically, due to data constraints and lack of network connectivity at the farms.

The study did not intend to take time from farming activities. Hence appointments for the interviews were scheduled according to the availability of participants.

1.9 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Qualitative data analysis aims to demonstrate participants' perception of certain phenomena by examining their mindset, understanding, values, demeanour, and experiences to align their narrative to the study questions. (Maree, 2016).

(Saneja,2016:1) defines data interpretation as understanding, organising, and interpreting given data to get meaningful conclusions. The author further states that researchers are often anxious that during the process of interpreting and theorising data, they might fail to do justice to what they have seen and heard from participants. (Bryman & Bell, 2016:341) concurs that researchers fear that they might contaminate participants' words and behaviour. However, the author advises that above-mentioned concerns need to be balanced, given that findings obtained through the study need meaning in intellectual communities only when the data has been reflected on, interpreted, and theorised.

1.10 Research Ethics

Research ethics serve as guidelines for the researcher when conducting his/her research. The purpose of ethics is to remind the researcher that participants must be treated with dignity no matter the outcomes of the study. Ethics address value through information confidentiality, nature of participation, and informed consent (Salkind, 2012:85)

1.10.1 Confidentiality

Participants were notified that the information gathered would be kept confidential and not shared with anyone except for the participants themselves and the researcher's supervisor. After data was captured, interview transcripts and interview observation notes would be kept in a safe place for five years and then destroyed. In addition, the confidentiality of participants was maintained in terms of personal information and their responses during the interviews. The names of participants were coded using participant codes assigned by the researcher.

1.10.2 Nature of participation

Participants were briefed about the voluntary nature of their participation and that they were not obligated to participate in the study, nor obligated to allow the researcher to observe any activities on their farm.

1.10.3 Informed consent

Informed consent refers to the researcher getting approval from participants to take part in interviews and sharing feedback on the study's findings. Information about the study should be presented to allow people to decide willingly whether or not to take part as research subjects. Before partaking in the study, participants were fully informed of what would be asked of them, and how the data would be used and communicated.

1.10.4 Honesty

Honesty was enforced throughout the research and in the management of data in terms of capturing, analysis, and interpretation. The researcher honestly reported data, results, and procedures; data was not fabricated or falsified in any way.

1.10.5 Favourable risk-benefit ratio

Although participants included in the study could be regarded as vulnerable, no physical, psychological, or economic risks were foreseen. However, the purpose of the study was thoroughly explained to the participants by the researcher and it was made clear that there would not be any financial rewards or compensation for their role in the study. Interview questions were posed in Sesotho to allow participants to express themselves freely. In addition, the researcher clarified that participation was voluntary and that participants could recuse themselves at any time. Their confidentiality would be maintained in terms of personal information. However, it is expected that study results on determinants and success factors of commercial farming will assist smallholder farmers to transform into commercial farming. These will be shared with AFASA for further support and development of women farmers.

1.11 Definition of Terms

Smallholder: The World Bank's rural strategy defines a smallholder as those with a low asset base, operating less than two hectares of cropland. It can also be defined as a farmer relying on family labour, the percentage of production consumed on-farm, and the quantity of the output ((Gagnet, 2003 n. p).

Commercialisation: Smalley (2013), describes commercialisation as the degree of participation in output markets with a focus primarily on cash income.

1.12 Geographical Demarcation

The field study was located in the District Municipality of Lejweleputswa in the Free State, South Africa. The district comprises the following municipalities: Matjhabeng, Tokologo, Nala, Masilonyana, and Tswelopele. The district is situated in the North-Western part of the Free State.

Free State is considered the bread-basket of South Africa, providing a substantial portion of the agricultural produce. Maize is the area's main product which gives the region the title of maize capital of South Africa. However, the district has high unemployment rates when compared with other districts. (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, n.d.).

1.13 Chapter Summary

Information, in the form of data and applicable material collected, was organised and consolidated into five chapters in the following order:

Chapter one presents the background of the study, outlining the problem statement, aims and objectives, research questions to be answered by the study, and the significance of the study. Moreover, it presented the research methodology applied in the study. The chapter also explains ethical issues and the limitations of the study and concludes by defining key terms used in the study.

Chapter two sets out a comprehensive review of available literature on the women smallholder farmer and commercialisation trends globally, regionally, and locally.

Chapter three provides details of the research methods applied to select the sample, and specifics of data collection and analysis, including the instruments adopted for the collection and analysis of data. This chapter discusses the limitations of this study and how ethical issues were dealt with.

Chapter four presents interpret and analyses the data gathered through interviews with participants derived from the methodology discussed in Chapter three of the study.

Chapter five discusses the main findings from chapter four and concludes based on those findings. Furthermore, the chapter offers recommendations emerging from the finding of the study.

1.14 Limitations of the Study

This research was of limited scope and analysed the following topic: Critical success factors for women smallholder-farmers transforming into commercial farmers in Lejweleputswa District Municipality, Free State.

Once the researcher received clearance from Ethical Committee to commence with the study, the researcher engaged with participants and drew up a schedule with dates and times for when interviews would occur. These were communicated to the participants. The researcher is familiar with the area and knows how far apart the farms in the area are, hence, she managed to plan and schedule interviews within the available time and with the available resources.

The researcher had to translate questions into Sesotho, to allow participants to understand and give in-depth answers in the language they understood.

Moreover, access roads to some farms posed a challenge for the researcher, the roads being inaccessible after heavy rains. Hence the researcher avoided appointments on such days, which extended the timeframe for data collection.

1.15 Chapter Conclusion

The pivotal quest for the study is best encapsulated by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO): approximately 80% of the world's food is provided by smallholder farmers. Women make up on average 43% of this agricultural labour in developing countries. Furthermore, they produce 20 to 30% less than male farmers because they encounter constraints related to their gender.

This chapter constitutes the field study summary and outlines the basic structure for the research process. Various aspects are addressed to give broader aspects of the study: the population sample, the research method adopted, the study aim and objectives, the geographic delineation of the study, the analysis approach, and the ethical imperatives deemed prudent to accomplish the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on the importance of commercial farming by women farmers and explores challenging constraints preventing women from commercial farming. In addition, the chapter identifies success factors contributing to the transformation to commercial farming. The review of the literature is meant to provide a better understanding of the problems established in Chapter 1 and should present a broader overview of research suitable to the topic.

2.2 Motive Behind Women Smallholder Farmers Transforming into Commercial Farmers

Unburdening women farmers from challenges such as gender disparities results in an increase in production, bringing better food and nutrition security globally Sindira Chetty (2016). The author further states that such empowerment allows women to participate in financially enhancing activities that contribute to the economy and the well-being of children.

Additionally, by allowing women the same opportunities as men, such as resources and education, could increase food production by up to 30%. The consequence could put an end to hunger for 150 million people. Additionally, an extra income allows women to pay for health care, better nutrition, and education for their children (Maryellen Kennedy Duckett, n.d.). Evidence shows that having women participate in commercial farming provides better access to the markets, effective financial management, and improved expertise as sales are boosted and cash revenue increases. Commercial farming can also teach women to anticipate the outcomes of climate change. In so doing, they also learn to diversify their products, avoiding planting crops vulnerable to climate change (Msuya & Hurtado, 2017:491).

The study conducted by (Ferdousi *et al.*, 2020:10) suggests that in India mushroom farming can present benefits for women farmers, as it provides lucrative prospects without requiring much land, technical knowledge, and capital to eliminate poverty within a very short space of time. Mushroom farming offers income opportunities and possibilities of exporting mushroom products, thereby creating employment prospects.

Furthermore, the study conducted on commercial poultry production reveals that it is one of the farming commodities practiced by women farmers from one generation to another, as poultry plays a significant role in households' food security. The activity assists women farmers in diversifying income and acts as an investment and insurance for the household. Poultry provides high-quality food, and their manure offers fertiliser, both of which can be lucrative for the farmer. This type of farming plays a vital role as it provides a sustainable source of income. It is important for the socio-cultural life of the rural community and supports women's empowerment (Padhi, 2016:3–6).

Similarly, the government of Nepal has noted a rise in the feminisation of agriculture due to the increase in the number of women who continue to rely on farming enterprises. Most women farmers show interest in farm enterprises such as livestock and vegetables. Current enhancements in earnings of these farm activities can persuade more rural women to participate, therefore opening ways to inclusive economic growth. Moreover, families of women participating in commercial vegetable farming (CVF), have welcomed and approved women's evolving roles. Due to CVF, households have received a boost in earnings, resulting in better nutrition. Women are persuaded to take leadership roles to support other women in the community. In addition, because women play an important role in earning income and improving the well-being of their families, communities are more open to their involvement in CVF (Balayar & Mazur, 2022b:9–16).

According to Adams *et al.* (2019:293), Malawian women farmers' participation in cash crop farming and the NGO's contribution to raising gender awareness have resulted in women confronting many patriarchal ideas. This has led to discussions on the so-called 'women's place' in the community. There is a shift in the social perceptions of gender and the gender balance is being adjusted at the community level. Moreover, by engaging in out-grower contract farming, women's bargaining power is increased and their dominance over household finances is boosted. Taking part in the scheme results in women eventually being breadwinners in their households. With complete control over their households, women can increase their bargaining power within their households and become empowered.

Likewise, Isaya *et al.* (2018:34) state that in Tanzania, earnings received by women farmers from their farming activities allow them to manage the basic needs in their households and enhance their life status. Profits acquired allow them to provide a good education for their children. Equipping women farmers with information and education supports the transition from smallholder to small-scale commercial farming. The transition also allows women farmers to produce more than they need for the household, therefore producing a surplus for the market.

In addition, in Rwanda, projects that promote the commercialisation of farming allow women to acquire an income, which brings about empowerment. Evidence shows that through empowerment women can improve the material conditions for their families and improve their leadership skills. Similarly, those women farmers who participated in these schemes received a boost in their incomes. They have greater access to, control of, and ownership of assets. They are more empowered, hence the adjustments in their participation in household chores, involvement in family decision-making, and better status in the family and the community (Bizinde & Shulda, 2017:3–6).

In Kenya, empowering women contributes to reducing the gender gap in agricultural production and can improve the efficiency of farms managed by women. An increase in productivity enhances food security and reduces poverty, which could provide substantial support for combining women's empowerment into current and future projects (Diirro *et al.*, 2018:1).

In addition to the above-mentioned, in Botswana, women farmers rely heavily on urban women to provide a market for their produce. On the other hand, women residents in urban areas also rely on rural women to supply them with beans and spinach either for household consumption or for repackaging and selling to the wider market in town. Moreover, activities such as beekeeping, poultry raising, and small stock-keeping empower women and result in an increase in yield on a variety of products that improve good nutrition for women, children, and their communities as well as economic diversification.

Agriculture plays a pivotal role in South Africa because it promotes rural development and poverty alleviation. Through the process of commercialisation of smallholder

farmers, the previously disadvantaged groups become a significant part of the economic base of rural development.

(Njobe,2015) states that the role played by the country's women smallholder farmers is widely acknowledged. Moreover, their contribution is also recognised concerning the improvement of gender-sensitive policies that talk back to the needs of women producers in the sector. Findings from the study by (Nwafor & Westhuizen:2020) in Bizana, Eastern Cape province of South Africa revealed that women participating in commercial farming can increase agricultural produce and sale of surplus, react to indicators from input and output markets, can access regional markets, and be part of the integration of farmers with agro-processor.

The government of South Africa made committed to supporting the commercialization programmes for 450 black smallholder farmers per year. Hence, in the State of National Address (2022), the president revealed that government intends to expand its substantial agricultural programmes to include supporting women smallholder farmers and assist with their integration into value-chains.

Loubser (2020:5) states that empowering South African women in farming could have a positive impact on production. Additionally, scholars have indicated that earnings received by women through empowerment initiatives are directly beneficial for their families. As more and more women choose careers in different spheres of agriculture, such as soil science, crop production, livestock nutrition, and animal health, it is vital to support and contribute to the role of women in agriculture. Supporting women farmers contributes to the health and wealth of the country.

2.3 Challenging Constraints Preventing Women from Commercial Farming

Sachs (2018:7) points out however, that in the United States (US), the impact of transforming from smallholder to commercial farming has not seriously enhanced women's power as the enterprise expanded, but rather fewer women occupy positions of power in agro-processing. Elements such as class, racial differences, ethnicity, and privileges are aggravated by the systems in place in rural areas where there is a dependency on cheap labour provided mainly by racial and ethnic minorities. Women working at large-scale agricultural enterprises have suffered exploitative working environments. Identity factors such as class, race, and gender are significant in the

US agricultural system. Women from minority groups are often expected to execute difficult tasks regarded as men's work and inappropriate for women whose families own the farms. Women from minority groups state that they undergo some form of exploitation not experienced by women in the dominant culture. Such claims are more evident in the agricultural sector.

Furthermore, in India, a combination of issues results in women farmers being more likely than men to face challenges. These include a low level of education, difficulty with transportation, the stipulation of time, and difficulties emulating restraints in the interaction between men and women. Additionally, women participate in different farming activities compared to men, their focus being on livestock breeding, crop production for household consumption, and preparing for harvesting. These contrasts between men and women make their requirements for resources and technical information very different (Govil & Rana, 2017:133). In addition, women smallholder farmers find it difficult to embrace the latest technology due to a lack of access to finance. They also have restricted access to production inputs such as fertiliser, seeds, and pesticides. Additionally, due to their small farm size, their bargaining power for inputs and outputs in the market is almost non-existent. Under these conditions, they are forced to borrow at high-interest rates to access production inputs (Baruah *et al.*, 2022:59).

Moreover, Nigerian women face the challenge of tradition that states that only men have the right to land ownership. Unfortunately, this tradition keeps women from the most important resource (land) in agricultural production. Women must depend on the land given to them by their husbands, while others make use of leased land for their farming activities (but only a few open-minded women farmers). There are indications that when a man is ready to give out land to his wife, he first chooses the parts that are suitable for production and gives out areas that are non-productive to the wife (Aneke & Alio, 2018:32).

The study by Chanana-Nag & Aggarwal (2020:24) in Kenya suggests that creating initiatives that could interest farmers in climate change and gender issues, calls for a well-organised transfer of resources for successful purpose in the field. The author states that climate-smart agriculture (CSA) could be the solution to aid women farmers solve challenges arising due to the impacts of climate change. However, for the CSA's

intentions to be unbiased and address gender disparities, the participation of women farmers and the gender gap must be thoroughly examined and taken into serious consideration.

Moreover, another severe obstacle faced by Kenyan women in urban agricultural activities was a lack of access to credit. Those women farmers who belonged to women farmer groups (WFG) could access credit, production inputs, information, and technologies and improved bargaining power from their different farmer groups. However, those not belonging to women farmer groups have been unable to adopt innovative technologies to improve their farming production and have also failed to take on new investments.

Dzvimbo *et al.* (2017) noted that many smallholder farmers in rural parts of Zimbabwe occupy the farming sector. Problems faced by the sector include a lack of infrastructure, limited access to the markets, high input costs, and a limited approach to improved inputs and production technologies. In addition, access to credit facilities, labour, and Extension Services constrain farming activities. Other challenges that hinder and disrupt progress in the farming sector are poor coordination of producers, global price increases, and lack of ownership and control of arable ground, especially for women (who are the majority participants in the sector).

According to Rantlo *et al.* (2020:49), Lesotho women farmers experience difficulties in taking part in commercial markets due to the official procedures that they must adhere to. Aspects such as a lack of market information, infrastructure, inadequate knowledge on quality and classification, a lack of transportation to and from markets, failure to access contractual agreements, and a lack of support from organisations could hinder the farmer's ability to access markets. Furthermore, there is currently insufficient access to ICT infrastructure, only 3% of the population has access to telecommunication. ICT can provide women farmers with delivering and enhancing relationships with agricultural extension services and can also permit interaction between different stakeholders across different countries. Having access to ICT can improve farmers' access to information pertinent to agricultural production and agribusiness (Akintunde & Oladele, 2019:54).

As reported by (DAFF,2011), agriculture is regarded as an essential means through which the high unemployment rate and poverty can be addressed in South Africa. However, the sector is not only two folded; with progressed commercial farming sector and an extensive number of subsistence farms. But concerning the actual size of the population, education, and technological skills, it is still mainly in the hands of white commercial farmers. Similarly, due to historical injustices; smallholder farming faces various challenges concerning post-apartheid policies that were not effective in promoting rural development (Lemke et al,2012:25). Low education levels and limited access to land, with some smallholder farmers having access to less than one hectare of land for agricultural production are the two main characteristics that can be classified as challenges(Carelson et al., 2021: 101).

Furthermore, South African women smallholder farmers experience challenges concerning access to information on weather patterns, soil analysis, good farming practices, market prices, and technological advances. ((Van der Walt, 2021).

Constraints impacting smallholder farmers in Limpopo Province of South Africa can be classified as technical, institutional, and socio-demographic factors. Women are incompetent concerning contractual agreements, have insufficient access to extension agents, poor organisational support, and low use of good agricultural practices, all these factors make it difficult for farmers to commercialise (Hlatshwayo et al., 2021: 2).

Moreover, women smallholder farmers are more susceptible to the hostile impacts of changing climate, as alluded to by the study conducted in South Africa. Besides being disadvantaged by cultural norms that restrict their access to land and finance, they are also faced with inadequate rainfall(Elum et al., 2017: 264).

The study by Thamaga-Chitja and Morojele (2014:151) suggests that South African women farmers are also plagued by low quantity crop production as well as soil erosion. Moreover, a lack of skills and little knowledge of controlling surface run-off and evaporation has proven to be a challenge. In addition, women farmers have poor technological skills in using water harvesting techniques to avail water for irrigation purposes. Low yields in production from the use of land and labour result in low earnings for women farmers. Also, low production yields lead to an insufficient supply

of raw materials for participation in the value chain, resulting in reduced revenue and a lack of competitiveness in the value chain. Therefore, for women to commercialise, they must escape the cycle of low production yield and low profits from land and labour.

(National Department of Agriculture, 2012: 2) indicates that one of the major aspects limiting women smallholder farmers from expanding their businesses is the high transactional costs resulting from dilapidated infrastructure. Most farmers are forced to produce less for market consumption due to sub-standard road networks and inconsistent distribution to the markets. The high transport costs can affect the quantity and quality of inputs and farming outputs. Non-existent infrastructure and communication services in remote rural areas are some of the reasons for the increase in transactional costs. In addition, the inability to get market information and inadequate access to financial markets, resulted in women farmers having low-level bargaining power, thus restricting them from selling their produce timeously to make a profit.

However, removing constraints faced by women smallholder farmers in agriculture has the potential to produce significant gains for society by increasing agricultural productivity, reducing poverty and hunger, and promoting economic growth. This could yield enormous benefits for women and their families (Njobe, 2015)

2.4 Success Factors Contributing to the Transformation of Women smallholder-farmers to Commercial Farming

2.4.1 Participating in contract farming (CF)

Contract farming entails agricultural production executed based on the agreement between the buyer and the farmer. The buyer can specify the quantity and quality of the farm produce. Hence in this day and age of market liberalization, consumers worldwide are becoming more sophisticated and are showing interest in better quality and consistency.

In an attempt to expand agribusiness in South Africa, there is a threat that smallholder farmers could be side-lined as larger farms will become increasingly necessary for a profitable operation. Efforts by the government and private sector to remedy the situation have learned more towards establishing income generation

activities for rural people. Regrettably, there is fairly little evidence that such attempts have succeeded. This is mostly due to the shortage of backward and forward market linkages i.e. smallholder farmers lack both dependable and cost-efficient inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, credit, and extension advice, and guaranteed profitable markets for their output. However, coherent contract farming provides such linkages and provides an essential way in which small agricultural producers can participate in commercial farming. Likewise, it offers the opportunity to ensure a reliable source of supply, from both quantity and quality perspectives (Ayinke, 2011: 7)

(Kirsten & Sartorius, 2002: 508) explain that contract farming is not entirely a new concept in South Africa, it is practiced by smallholders in the farming of tea, fruits, flowers, and sugarcane. However, the author warns that for a regular agribusiness firm, the transactional costs linked to arrangements with smallholder farmers are higher than for larger, more established farmers.

The study conducted in Sri Lanka revealed that contract farming could improve the capabilities and welfare of women farmers, as well as enhance labour productivity. Moreover, it is very crucial to empower women by putting them first in new investments. Therefore, contract farming allows farmers to get paid more income by stimulating the production yield and introducing them to competitive markets. Additionally, CF can eradicate gender discrimination in the farming sector. Such eradication improves the general profits gained from working in groups that include both men and women. CF brings about socio-economic fairness because it gives equal opportunities to all the members of the commercial group. Furthermore, distributing resources evenly prevents injustice and ensures the best allocation of resources for economic efficiency. This in turn has a positive impact on performance Dishanka *et al.* (2021:51).

In Ghana, due to many challenges faced by farmers in accessing and marketing their products, CF is recognised as a way to assist women farmers take part in the markets. Contract farming plays a big role in the improvement of agricultural output and is also able to enhance the income of farmers. With CF, there is also an improvement in

infrastructure because business is normally undertaken in areas that are easily accessible (Dubbart, 2019:13).

CF is acknowledged in Zimbabwe, due to its ability to address most of the challenges faced by many farmers. It is viewed as an instrument that can be used to avail new market prospects, and also supply farmers with training and credit that results in the optimisation of production for smallholder farmers. In addition, CF makes farmers more technically efficient, in contrast to those that are non-contract farmers. Farmers can reach high levels of technical efficiency since the contractor gives extension support and specialised training intended to enhance the farmer's productivity. This support is as stipulated in the contractual agreement (Dube & Mugwagwa 2017:70–75)

Locally analysts view CF as a means to help farmers transform from smallholder producers of the low-value staple to commercial production of higher-value crops, giving them access to the extensive economy and increasing their income. However, there are worries that companies may side-line smallholders, choosing to work with a smaller number of larger farmers, therefore, worsening rural income inequality. Furthermore, other analysts claim that where firms work with smallholder farmers, inequality and information between them allow agribusiness firms to enforce contract terms on small farmers, manipulate quality standards to reduce payments to farmers, and back out on agreements if there are changes in market conditions (Minot & Ronchi, 2014: 1).

(Adewumi et al., 2011: 79) however, believes that contract farming can be developed into an integral policy where the South African government, together with the growers and agro-industry can link up to make a conducive production environment. Also, the sustainability of CF requires a consistent policy option that imposes well-documented and clearly explained agreements between the farmers and the processor.

Results from the study conducted in the North West province of South Africa show that lack of government assistance and agricultural produce with low quality from suppliers (smallholders) prevent contract farming between suppliers and big buyers. Also, financial management, access to credit, and volume of sales are important determinants of CF (Anim et al., 2008: 200).

Similarly, Fanadzo and Ncube (2018:441–442) state that powerful partnerships between smallholder farmers and the private sector can be created through contract farming, resulting in the adoption of innovative techniques, and market growth. However, in the past, numerous smallholder farmers in South Africa were involved in unsuccessful contract farming. This was caused by contractors never offering farmers capacity building, in terms of farmer training and monitoring in the management of crop production. In turn, the produce was of low quality and quantity. Empowering smallholder farmers, through capacity building, helps them better meet international standards of quality products and improved production techniques. Having these in place supports successful negotiations in the profit value chain.

2.4.2 Participating in women cooperatives

According to (Ortmann & King, 2006: 50) cooperatives are created to serve their members, who withhold influence over cooperative functions and activities. They can improve incomes, negotiate for reduced costs, develop the viability of business activities, and be able to contribute towards reducing poverty, enhancing empowerment, and creating jobs.

Rosefield (2017:50) states that in the United States, some farmers have attempted to intensify their market power by using cooperatives and commodity partnerships. Cooperatives can be seen as a deal made by groups of farmers to purchase production inputs; process produces or deliver output to market. Some scholars have proposed that cooperatives increase bargaining power and competition in markets where the single farmer could otherwise be taken advantage of.

In Greece, the fundamental structure of entrepreneurship at the local level is demonstrated by women's cooperatives. Business capabilities were enhanced by carrying out activities such as processing local agricultural products and processing aromatic plants and herbs. The result was that their purpose in the community was recognised. Despite their contribution to the development of the local economy, these cooperatives encountered complications and operational problems. The challenges were aggravated by past years' economic instability, which caused a decline in tourism, and with that, demand for services declined. However, women's cooperatives continue to flourish despite the challenges (Chatzitheodoridis *et al.*, 2017:64).

The study by Gashaw & Kibret (2018:99) found that in Ethiopia, agricultural cooperatives assist smallholder farmers to overcome challenges that prohibit them from taking advantage of their businesses. Cooperatives improve farmer bargaining power and minimize the risks encountered in the markets. In addition, most of the farmers are attracted to joining cooperatives because members have access to credit. Cooperatives are considered dependable sources of credit as opposed to formal lending institutions that come with onerous security requirements.

Agricultural cooperatives in Kenya have a beneficial effect on food production volumes, as its members can gain access to modern technology and are afforded participation in formal markets. Cooperatives that are correctly run can provide high-quality services to their members and assist in providing elements such as food security, sustainable use of natural resources, and irrigation farming practices. Women belonging to cooperatives gain access to necessary resources – production inputs, credit, and labour – and technology suitable for their commodity production. Women's participation in cooperatives, family planning, and enhanced access to resources sustains food security and consequently provides economic empowerment (Ingutia & Sumelius, 2022a:12).

In Lesotho, a study found that women belonging to cooperatives together with men performed well when given new prospects with possibilities of generating improved income. Women remained behind as their husbands migrated to South Africa for work opportunities. Hence, these women found themselves tilling the land and safeguarding their unfarmed land by inviting cooperatives to make use of it. They also used the opportunity that comes with being a member of a cooperative to get involved in livestock production (Okali & Bellwood-Howard, 2017:5).

Locally, (Ortmann & King, 2006: 62) state that underperforming and unsuccessful cooperatives in the former homeland indicate that members did not grasp what the purpose of a cooperative is, how it functions, and what the members' responsibilities entailed. This could have emanated from members' inexperience, and lack of education and training. Furthermore, (the Department of Agriculture, 2011) reported that numerous challenges hinder the success of cooperatives, these include lack of access to finance. Members of cooperatives have sound business proposals; however, they lack funds to implement them.

According to (Small Enterprise Development Agency, 2013) the country's agricultural cooperatives play a critical role in the production and distribution of food, as well as in supporting long-term food security to reduce poverty. Moreover, agricultural cooperatives create employment and reduce poverty. (Sikwela *et al.*, 2016:540) explains that irrespective of being faced with complicated supply chains and institutional constraints, the country's agricultural cooperatives have been able to access high-value markets, to enhance the livelihood of smallholder farmers. Cooperatives are capable of reducing transactional costs and strengthening the bargaining power of farmers versus the market.

Agricultural cooperatives offer a network of mutual support for women to overcome cultural restrictions. They are also able to increase their productivity and income by collectively bargaining affordable prices for production inputs such as fertilizers, seeds, transportation, and storage (Ngomane & Sebola, 2019: 128).

2.4.3 Adoption of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) technologies

There appears to be a fast-growing interest in climate-smart agriculture (CSA), especially in the developing world due to its promising potential to improve food security, climate change resilience, and mitigation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission (Abegunde *et al.*, 2020: 8).

Khatri-Chhetri *et al.* (2020:39) state that studies conducted in Nepal found that, depending on activities, women farmers make the most use of CSA technologies such as zero tillage machines, direct seeded rice, laser and leveling, and green manuring. These all can minimise the labour problems of women farmers. CSA technologies do not only reduce labour hours but can also assist women farmers gain access to decision-making procedures, for agricultural resources and connect the farmers to the latest market prospects. Moreover, Tsige *et al.* (2020:2) state that adopting CSA technologies can enhance food security and revenue, however, not every farmer has access to it. This is especially true for women smallholder farmers in Ethiopia who are impacted by gender disparities, constraining their ability to adapt agricultural technologies. If both men and women were to receive equal control over production inputs, production output could increase remarkably.

The study conducted in King Cetshwayo District in KZN province of South Africa however, revealed that technology interventions or introduction do not guarantee that there will be automatic adoption or transfer. There are important factors involved in the transfer or adoption of technologies. The farmers' traits and attributes deep-rooted in technologies or farming practices are major factors actively involved in the dynamics of technology transfer or adoption, particularly in smallholder farming. The authors warn that smallholder farmers need financial assistance and guarantee to eagerly adopt CSA practices (Abegunde et al., 2020: 15). However, smallholder farmers are diverse with some capable of adopting different CSA technologies, thus, CSA technologies should be engineered to suit the farmers' individual needs and abilities (Mmapatla et al., 2021: 170).

Although recent government policies are in favour of agricultural transformation, South African smallholder farmers lack resources and access to finance. Such challenges force smallholder farmers to continue applying existing farming practices without incurring costs. It is usually better for them to continue doing what they are used to, even if farm productivity and profitability are low (Obi & Maya, 2021: 15).

Nevertheless, (Abegunde et al., 2019: 22) suggest that smallholder farmers, who are more open to the integration of different farming techniques, would adopt more CSA practices compared to their counterparts who rely solely on one farm enterprise. Being open to the combination of varying techniques creates a promising and conducive platform for the mainstream.

2.5 Conclusion

Chapter two discussed literature on the motive for women smallholder farmers to transform into commercial farmers. Research shows that in countries such as South Africa, Tanzania, Botswana, and Nepal, the most common reason women smallholder farmers move into commercial farming is because of income opportunities and the need for food security. However, in Malawi and Kenya, transformation to commercial farming is seen as a way to close the gender gap that exists between men and women in terms of access to agricultural resources.

The chapter also discussed challenging constraints preventing women from commercial farming. The study found that in countries such as US and Nigeria women

smallholder farmers are plagued by patriarchal systems that make them invisible and unequal to their male counterparts. South African and Indian women smallholder farmers are found to lack the technical skills that are vital for production. Researchers suggest that by using the latest technology, there is an increase in production, which in turn leads to sufficient supply to the markets.

Furthermore, South Africa is continuously attempting to amend historical injustices. However, the post-apartheid policies have not been effective in promoting rural development. Hence government is in pursuit of returning land to its rightful owners.

The chapter also touched on success factors contributing to the transformation of women smallholder farmers into commercial farmers. In countries such as Sri Lanka, Ghana, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, contract farming is considered one factor contributing to the successful transformation to commercial farming. It encourages the adoption of new ideas and encourages growth in the markets. However, in the US, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Lesotho, cooperatives or women farmer groups can access necessary resources such as credit, labour, and technology, hence there has been a successful transformation. There are however conflicting views on CF, some analysts view it as an empowering tool to empower women farmers to increase production and profit. On the other hand, some view it as a vehicle for large firms to manipulate quality standards to reduce payments due to small farmers.

Cooperatives that are correctly run, can improve the income of women smallholder farmers. Literature suggests that previous failures by cooperatives was due to members' lack of experience, education and training. However, participating in cooperative allows women to bargain or negotiate for lower reduced costs in production inputs therefore increasing production and profit.

Adoption of CSA has the potential to improve food security. Though, adoption of these technologies is not guaranteed as some of the farmers need financial assistance to adopt such technologies. Instead of adopting, some farmers opt to continue with farming practices they are accustomed to.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three sets out the research approach implemented in this study, including the design followed by the researcher with a focus on achieving the aims and objectives presented in the first chapter. Moreover, the chapter addresses the population from which the sample was taken. The methods applied to data collection and the instruments used are also discussed along with how the data gathered were analysed and interpreted.

3.2 Research Methodology

Research methodology is the technique used to solve problems. It is the discipline of learning how research is managed systematically (Mishra & Alok, 2017:3). The research methodology will reflect on the epistemological consideration and will feature an interpretivism approach.

3.2.1 Epistemology consideration

The study adopted an interpretivism approach to women smallholder-farmers. Bryman and Bell (2016:14) define it as an approach where the researcher needs to respect the differences between people and the objects in their natural environment. Moreover, it focuses more on human understanding and contributions. This approach allowed the researcher to see the farming industry through the eyes of selected participants in order to acknowledge their work and contribution through a benevolent perspective.

3.2.2 Research design

The success of any research study depends on the research strategy that is linked to the research objectives and it should be able to give the researcher answers to his/her questions. Bryman and Bell (2016:100) define research design as a plan used by the researcher to manage the application of research methods and carefully examine the seceding data. Moreover, Kazdin (2022:7) defines research design as the arrangement or plan to examine the question or hypothesis of interest. Similarly, it is a process of gathering and interpreting data, with a clear aim of answering the research question set by the researcher (Rahi, 2017:2). Additionally, the aim of research design

should be to give adequate information to make the study explicit. This can assist readers in evaluating the study, considering the outlined research objectives, while enabling replicability (Sovacool *et al.*, 2018).

The study adopted a qualitative and inductive research approach, as the approach offers different ways of collecting data, such as semi-structured interviews.

Bryman and Bell (2016:31) define qualitative research as a way to accentuate words in the gathering and analysing data. While human emotions are hard to quantify (have a numeric value assigned to them), qualitative research is more effective than quantitative research when investigating emotional responses. The method uses descriptions and words rather than numbers. Moreover, it expresses general research questions and asks about the phenomena of the study in all its complexity. Furthermore, qualitative researchers explore things in their natural environment, in an effort to make sense of it or in terms of individual's perception of it (Creswell & Poth, 2018:8).

One other reason qualitative research was deemed appropriate for the study was that it envelopes a variety of methods for gathering and analysing data about the thoughts, attitudes, observations and understandings of individuals and groups in different contexts (Sovacool *et al.*, 2018:18). Through the interviews, research participants were awarded a chance to discuss their perspectives about circumstances under investigation without any interference from the researcher.

Nonetheless, (Rental, 2019:52) warns of the disadvantages associated with qualitative research, such as the study cannot be generalised because the sample involved is normally too small. In addition, that the researcher interprets the research according to his or her own biased view, which can distort the data gathered.

Bryman and Bell (2016:11) describe inductive approach as moving from the specific to general, with theory being the outcome of the research. For instance, the researcher draws general conclusions out of observations. The author further states that inductive research uses grounded theory to create a theoretical understanding of the descriptions that participants use to narrate their understanding of the social world.

3.2.3 Research procedure

After the university issued ethical clearance, the researcher visited all participants to inform them of the aim of the study and to explain procedures that would be followed to collect data. These short visits were easily managed, as the researcher is familiar with the area. The researcher also shared the research objectives and general instructions to be followed during the semi-structured interviews. An informed consent form was compiled in Sesotho (Appendix: A) and issued to the participants to sign to acknowledge their participation in the study. Details of both the researcher and supervisor were shared with participants to clarify any matters of uncertainty. a

3.3 Sampling Strategy

Moreover, sampling is a strategy of drawing a conclusion about the attributes of the whole (population) by examining a part of the population (Mukhopadhyay, 2009:1). Similarly, Sharma (2017:741) explains sampling as a method (procedure or device) applied by a researcher to logically choose a smaller number of illustrative items or individuals (a subset) from a pre-defined population. This is to assist in providing subjects (data source) for observation or experimentation as per the objectives of the study.

According to Bryman and Bell (2016:177), strategies for selection may be based on probability sampling and non-probability sampling.

3.3.1 Study population

A population is a group of individuals having one or more characteristics of interest. According to Alvi (2016:10), the population refers to all members who meet the specific benchmark identified for a research inquiry. Additionally, Wu and Thompson (2020:3) define 'population' as an actual hypothetical set of components with features and attributes, which can be shown by random variables and their distinct probability distribution. Salkind (2012:33) suggests that given the challenges of limited time and resources that most researchers experience, the expected strategy will be to approach a segment of a large group of participants and conduct the study with that smaller group. In this context, the larger group is called the 'population', while the smaller group chosen from population is called the 'sample'.

For the purpose of the study, the researcher sampled from the population of women farmers in Lejweleputswa.

3.3.2 Non-probability sampling

The study employed non-probability sampling. Benefits associated with this type of sampling include: cost-effectiveness, less time and ease of use if there is a small population to work with. Due to high costs associated with data collection surveys and the low number of responses, the researcher opted for non-probability sampling to create an in-depth description of the population sample.

Etikan *et al.* (2016:1) regard non-probability sampling as a procedure, where samples are collected and participants in the population are not chosen at random. Additionally, Etikan and Bala (2017:1) define non-probability sampling as a sampling technique that does not guarantee that elements in the universe will have a chance to be included in the study sample.

Thus, the sample for the study was purposively selected, based on the researcher's choice of participants who had the potential to contribute to the study due to their knowledge of the topic. This sample was considered a representative subset of the population in the study.

Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to handpick cases and participants chosen for the study possessed qualities that were regarded as appropriate for the study (Stommel & Wills, 2004:303). The technique requires an understanding of the research questions and helps to persuade the participants of the importance of the investigation.

Emmel (2013) explains that the strength of purposive sampling lies in a thorough examination of information offered by rich cases, learning more about research questions and factors considered to be of great importance to the researcher. The method entails determining and choosing groups or individuals with excessive knowledge of the study who are readily available and willing to share life experiences and ideas in a well-spoken, meaningful and thoughtful way.

The study further employed maximum variation sampling to allow fairness when collecting data from participants. Patton (2015) describes maximum variation as a

process of finding key elements of variation and then exploring cases that vary from each other as much as possible. The essence behind maximum variation sampling is to better understand the phenomenon by examining it from all angles. The different range of interviewees assisted the researcher to identify common themes evident across the sample.

AFASA (African Farmers Association of South Africa) is a body of African farmers located in all provinces. Their mission is to develop farmers to participate meaningfully in both formal and informal markets. The researcher approached the chairperson of AFASA in Lejweleputswa by email to explain the purpose of the study and requested access to a database of women smallholder-farmers in the area. The list contained names, contact details, farm name, town, young/adult, and farmer category (subsistent, smallholder and commercial). Permission was granted to utilise the information.

Fifteen participants from different commodities were sampled from a population of 48 women smallholder-farmers in Lejweleputswa. Participants selected were all women farmers: being either adults or youth, farming various commodities (crop, vegetable, poultry, dairy, cattle and piggery production), from different areas (Tswelopele, Masilonyana, Nala, Matjhabeng and Tokologo), with different farm ownership (single-owner or cooperative).

These smallholder farmers were purposefully chosen based on their availability and variety with regard to gender, age, commodity, farm ownership and area of operation. Data collection instrument, in the form of semi-structured interviews and interview guide consisting of 10 questions was used for the study. Using a qualitative method, which encompassed a defined set of open-ended questions, the researcher created a meaningful flow of conversation for the interview. The method also afforded the researcher the ability to explore themes from the answers given by the interviewees. The researcher is familiar with the government's agricultural department that works closely with participants. Knowledge of this relationship was used in the design of the questions so that participants felt comfortable and safe during the interviews.

3.3.3 Inclusive and exclusive criteria

Inclusive criteria

- Women farming within the vicinity of Lejweleputswa District Municipality
- Both adult and youth (18-35 years of age) woman farmers
- Women participating in any farming commodity
- Business/farms owned by single women farmers or those in a cooperative setting
- Women operating as a smallholder farmer

Exclusive criteria

- Women farmers not currently active in farming.

3.3.4 Sample size

Bryman and Bell (2016:177) stress the importance of sample size: the larger the sample, the more representative it is likely to be. However, the author also warns that a researcher might not get precise outcomes if the size of the sample is increased. Nevertheless, it would increase the likelihood of the sample being representative and reduce sampling error. For the sample size to be justifiable and unbiased in qualitative research with open-ended questions, the method relies on the concept of data saturation.

3.3.5 Data Saturation

Aldiabat and le Navenec (2018:246) warn that the most notable and anxiety-provoking problem faced by researchers in assessing the authenticity of research findings is related to the question of when data gathering should cease. Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study, when no new information is coming forth and when further coding is no longer necessary (Fusch & Ness, 2015:1). The researcher used her own judgement to cease gathering data once it was clear that no additional 'new' data was coming through and that information from interviewees was repetitive.

3.4 Data Collection

The following step after identifying research questions and setting research design, is to collect data. According to Salkind (2012:156), as soon the researcher determines what information will be suitable to collect and from which source, the next step would be to create a plan for collecting it. This would allow the researcher to apply appropriate techniques to analyse and make sense of the data. However, Kothari (2004:95) warns that in choosing the most suitable method of collecting data, attention should be given to the complexity of the study, the scope of the study and its aims. The researcher chose semi-structured interviews to collect data.

3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

According to Galletta (2014:24), semi-structured interviews offer a range of options because they are structured to address precise topics related to the phenomenon of the study, while giving participants an opportunity to provide new meaning to the study focus. Moreover, they offer versatility while giving a multi-layered stream of data. However, despite the above benefits, it is also possible for the researcher to compose leading questions that could bias the interview.

Wilson (2014:24) describes semi-structured interviews as critically gathering data on the topic at hand, while permitting some investigation into new matters or themes when they appear. In addition, based on how the participant answers the question, the researcher can ask follow-up questions to get an in-depth understanding. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to use discretion on the volume and sequence of questions to pose to the participant. This method includes open-ended and close-ended questions that can provide quantitative and qualitative data.

The researcher set up 15 appointments with women smallholder-farmers and conducted one-on-one interviews with them at the farms where they live and work. Five women were from Matjhabeng Municipality (Virginia & Welkom), four were from Tokologo Municipality (Hertzogville & Boshof), four were also from Masilonyana Municipality (Verkeerdevlei & Brandfort). One farmer was from Nala Municipality (Bothaville) and one from Tswelopele Municipality (Hoopstad). The researcher also estimated the drive between municipalities to be between 30 minutes to 2 hours, to conduct 1-to-1,5-hour interviews with each participant. Interviews were a collaborative

exercise and were carried out with the consent of participants. All interviews were conducted in Sesotho, which is a mother-tongue language for the participants. Transcripts in the form of audio recordings were done in Sesotho, and translated to English, and referenced to summarise data.

Participants were recruited by personal emails obtained from data from the association of farmers. In addition, follow-up telephone calls were made to ensure that they had received the emails. Some of the participants gave consent to the interviews by responding to the interview request emails, while others did so telephonically, due to data constraints and lack of network connectivity at the farms.

The study did not intend to take time from farming activities. Hence appointments for the interviews were scheduled according to the availability of participants. Each participant was contacted to give a time that would best suit her.

3.4.2 Data processing

Following the collection of all information required, data needs to be processed and analysed. According to Kothari (2004), when a researcher is processing data, it is imperative to note that it is being edited, coded, classified and tabulated to establish that it corresponds with the analysis process.

Data gathered during the study was edited to establish validity and organised properly to ensure easy coding and tabulation. Once the data had been edited, coding was allocated by using specific marks to the written responses to ensure subdivision into relevant units of analysis. Data that was gathered from questions posed to participants in the form of interviews was then organised into appropriate groups suitable to the research problem in question. An enormous amount of gathered data was reduced into workable groupings. This guaranteed that data was placed into classes based on similar characteristics, known as data classification.

Lastly, the data collected was encapsulated by converting it into tables for advanced investigation through a tabulation process. Moreover, data was interpreted into figures/graphs to give further meaning to the textual information.

3.4.3 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis aims to demonstrate participants' perception of certain phenomena by examining their mindset, understanding, values, demeanour, and experiences in an effort to approximate their formulation of the phenomenon. Furthermore, the exercise considers the data collected to ascertain if any trends exist. This can be obtained by sorting, manipulating and summarising data to obtain answers to research questions (Maree, 2016).

Data collected for the study was examined by applying thematic and content analysis, summary tables and comparative analysis. According to Bryman and Bell (2016:350), thematic analysis can vary and is not tied to a particular way of thinking. The purpose of thematic analysis is to pinpoint, assess, and describe themes or patterns in data given by participants.

Qualitative data gathered was transcribed and analysed thematically after it was grouped into themes comprising broad and specific categories.

3.4.4 Data interpretation

Data interpretation refers to understanding, organising and interpreting given data, to get meaningful conclusions (Saneja, 2016:1). Moreover, researchers are often anxious that during the process of interpreting and theorising data, they might fail in doing justice to what they've seen and heard from participant. They fear that they might contaminate the participant's words and behaviour. The above-mentioned concerns need to be balanced, given that findings acquire significance in intellectual communities only when you have reflected on, interpreted and theorised your data (Bryman & Bell, 2016:341).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics serve as guidelines for the researcher when conducting research. The purpose of ethics is to remind the researcher that participants must be treated with dignity in spite of the study outcomes. Ethics address value in the following prevalence: information confidentiality, nature of participation and informed consent (Salkind, 2012:85)

3.5.1 Information confidentiality

Participants were notified that the information gathered would be kept confidential and not shared with anyone except for participants themselves and the researcher's supervisor. After the data was captured, interview transcripts and interview observation notes would be kept in a safe place for a period of five years and then destroyed.

3.5.2 Nature of participation

Participants were briefed on the voluntary nature of their participation and that they were under no obligation to participate in the study, nor to allow the researcher to observe any activities in their farm.

3.5.3 Informed consent

Informed consent refers to the researcher getting approval from participants to take part in interviews and to share feedback on the findings of the study. Information on the study must be presented to allow people to decide willingly whether or not to take part as research subjects. Before partaking in the field study, participants were fully informed of what would be asked of them, and how the data would be used. In addition, confidentiality of participants was maintained, in terms of personal information and their responses during the interviews. To this end, the names of participants were coded using participant codes assigned by the researcher.

3.5.4 Honesty

Honesty was enforced throughout the duration of the research and in the management of data in terms of capturing, analysis and interpretation. The researcher reported data, results and procedures with honesty. Data was not fabricated or falsified in any way.

3.5.5 Favourable risk-benefit ratio

Although participants included in the study can be regarded as vulnerable, no physical, psychological, nor economic risks were foreseen. However, the researcher thoroughly explained to participants the purpose of the study and that there would not be any

financial rewards or compensation for their role in the study. Interviews were posed in Sesotho to allow participants to express themselves freely. In addition, the researcher clarified that participation was voluntary, that participants could recuse themselves at any time and that in terms of personal information, their confidentiality would be maintained. It is expected that determinants of commercial farming from the study will assist smallholder farmers to move into commercial farming. In addition, results of the study would be shared with AFASA for further support and development of women farmers.

3.6 Geographical Demarcation

The research study was located in the District Municipality of Lejweleputswa in the province of the Free State. The district is made up of the following local municipalities: Matjhabeng, Tokologo, Nala, Masilonyana and Tswelopele. The district is situated in the North-Western part of the Free State.

Free State is considered the bread-basket of South Africa, providing a substantial portion of the agricultural produce. Maize is the area's main product and the region is also known as the maize capital of South Africa. However, the district has high unemployment rates, when compared with other districts. (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, n.d.).

3.7 Challenges experienced during the study

This research was of limited scope and analysed the following topic: 'Critical success factors for women smallholder-farmers transforming into commercial farmers in Lejweleputswa District Municipality, Free State'.

Once the researcher received clearance from the Ethical Committee to commence with the study, the researcher drew up a schedule with dates and times as to when interviews would take place and communicated such with participants. The researcher is familiar with the area and knows how far apart the farms in municipalities are. Hence, she managed to plan and schedule interviews within the time and resources available.

The researcher had to translate the interview questions into Sesotho, so as to allow participants to understand and give in-depth answers in the language they understood.

Moreover, access roads to some farms posed a challenge for the researcher. Some of the roads were not accessible after heavy rains, hence the researcher avoided appointments on such days, which extended the timeframe for data collection.

3.8 Conclusion

The chapter mapped out an in-depth description of the methods employed for the study. The research study adopted a qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews to collect data. Qualitative research was appropriate for the study because it is cost and time effective. The selected design supports the research project to produce the desired outcomes. In addition, non-probability sampling was deemed appropriate as the sampling strategy when the researcher selected participants with an in-depth knowledge of the study.

The process involved using semi-structured interviews that gave participants a chance to explain the phenomenon in detail and awarded the researcher an opportunity to enquire further to get more information.

Data were processed and analysed accordingly. Study limitations explained challenges that were faced by the researcher and how they were dealt with.

The chapter concluded with ethical considerations that were adopted and adhered to during the study, such as informed consent, information confidentiality, honesty, nature of participation and confidentiality.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The chapter is centred on the data derived from the research methodology outlined in Chapter three. The findings of the study are arranged in thematic form. The critical themes obtained from the study are the following:

- basic description and demographics of the sampled women smallholder-farmers
- the purpose of transforming women smallholder-farmers into commercial farmers
- factors contributing to the challenging constraints inhibiting women smallholder-farmers from transforming into commercial farmers. These challenges include access to land, infrastructure, lack of transportation to and from the markets, lack of financial and general support. The above-mentioned challenges inhibit the pace of transformation and prevent women smallholder-farmers from reaching their full potential.

The main themes identified provide an insight into frustrations experienced by women smallholder-farmers, but also success factors that can accelerate the rate of their transformation to commercial farming.

The findings of the study are detailed in line with problem statement, research questions and objectives, as well as a literature review. The discussions below reflect the opinions of the participants, which were gathered during the interviews.

4.2 Basic Description and Demographics of Sampled Women Smallholder-Farmers

In total, 15 women smallholder-farmers in the district municipality of Lejweleputswa participated in the study. All 15 participants were interviewed at various farms in a total of two weeks until data saturation was reached.

Fifteen women from different local municipalities participated in the study through semi-structured interviews. Participants were interviewed in Sesotho, except for two,

numbers 4 and 5, who preferred English. Table 4.1 indicates the demographics of the women sampled for the research study.

Fifteen participants were interviewed, 4 of which are between the ages of 30–40, making up 27% of the population. Three out of 4 are considered youth, because they are under the age of 35. Similarly, 3 participants, equating to 20% are between the ages of 60–70. Additionally, only 2 participants are between the ages of 40–50, making up 13% of the population. The majority (6) of the participants, representing 33% of the sample, are between 50–60 years old.

Figure 4.1 also illustrates those 9 out of 15 participants, amounting to 67% that are the sole owners of the farms/land acquired from Land Reform. However, only 2 participants are from farms owned as a family trust, making up 13%, while 4 belong to cooperatives, constituting 20% of the sampled participants.

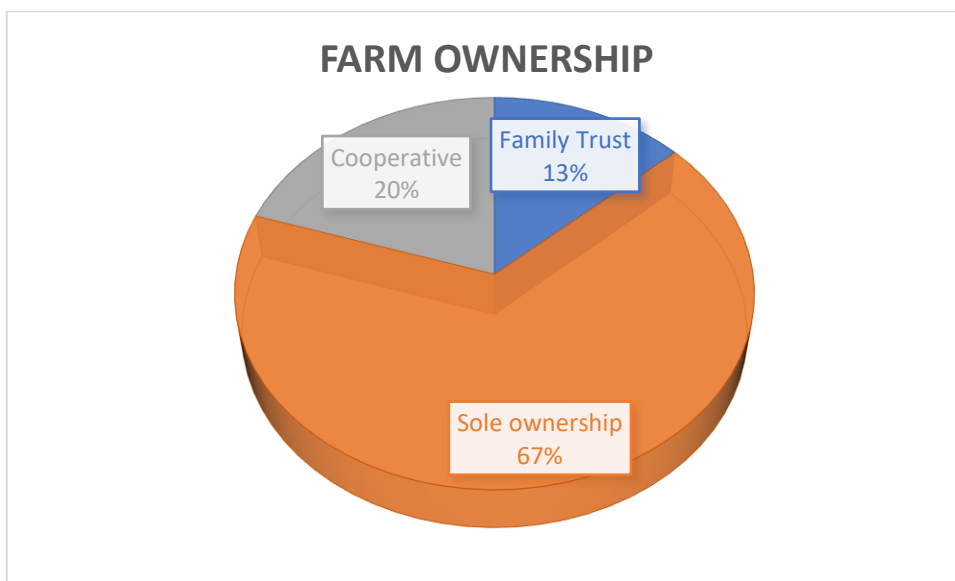


Figure 4.1: Farm ownership

Regarding participants' number of years in farming, 8 participants have less than 1–5 years' experience, representing 53% of participants, 3 of the women have 5–10 years' experience equal to 20% of the population sampled. Similarly, 2 have 10–15 years' experience, making up 13%, while 2 have been in the industry for more than 15–20 years, representing 13% of the population sampled.

In relation to the location of the farms, figure 4.2 shows that 8 out of 15 participants, which presents 53% of the sample, practice farming in Matjhabeng Municipality. Two of the participants are from Tokologo Municipality, tallying up to 13% of the participants in the study. Table 4.1 also shows that 3 of the participants are in Masilonyana Municipality, constituting 20%, while only 1 is from Tswelopele Municipality and 1 from Nala Municipality, equalling 7% each of the sample population.

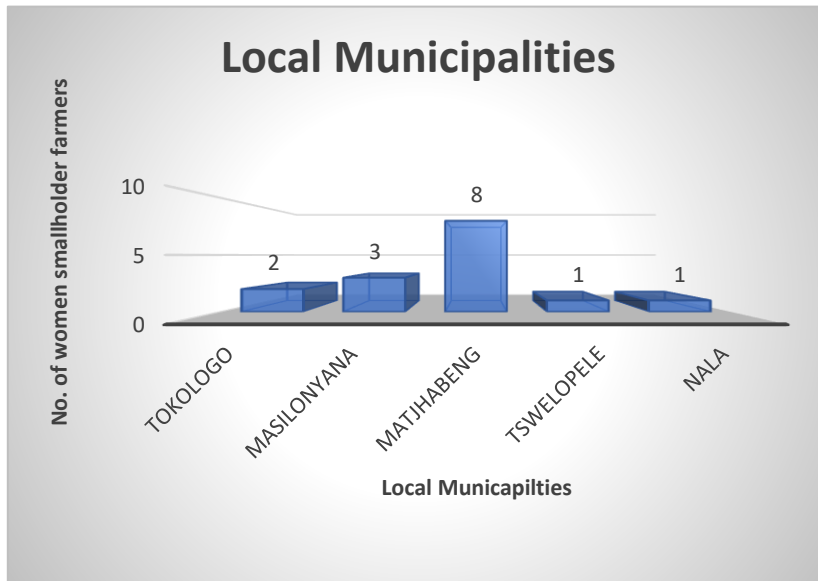


Figure 4.2: Local municipalities

Table 4.1: Demographic information of the 15 participants

| Participants | Municipality (Town) | Commodity | Ownership (single owner/cooperative/family trust) | Farm size | Age | Farming experience |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | Tokologo (Hertzogville) | Livestock | Sole Owner | 1146 Ha | Adult (58 yrs.) | 1–5 yrs. |
| 2. | Tokologo (Dealesville) | Mixed (Poultry/Vegetables) | Family Trust | 379 Ha | Adult (63 yrs.) | 10–15 yrs. |
| 3. | Masilonyana (Verkeerdevlei) | Poultry | Sole Owner | 2 Ha | Adult (58 yrs.) | 10–15 yrs. |
| 4. | Masilonyana (Brandfort) | Mixed (Crop/Livestock) | Sole Owner | 427 Ha | Adult (38 yrs.) | 1–5 yrs. |
| 5. | Masilonyana (Brandfort) | Mixed (Crop/Livestock) | Sole Owner | 475 Ha | Youth (35 yrs.) | 5–10 yrs. |
| 6. | Matjhabeng (Welkom) | Mixed (Crop/Livestock) | Sole Owner | 98.4 Ha | Adult (65 yrs.) | 15–20 yrs. |
| 7. | Matjhabeng (Odendaalsrus) | Livestock | Sole Owner | 25 Ha | Adult (62 yrs.) | 5–10 yrs. |
| 8. | Matjhabeng (Welkom) | Poultry | Sole Owner | 2 Ha | Adult (52yrs.) | 1–5 yrs. |
| 9. | Matjhabeng (Virginia) | Poultry | Cooperative | 9 Ha | Adult (44 yrs.) | 1–5 yrs. |
| 10. | (Matjhabeng (Virginia) | Mixed (Poultry/Vegetables) | Cooperative | 10 Ha | Adult (56 yrs.) | 1–5 yrs. |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------------|------------|
| 11. | Matjhabeng (Odendaalsrus) | Poultry | Cooperative | 12 Ha | Youth (31 yrs.) | 5–10 yrs. |
| 12. | Matjhabeng (Odendaalsrus) | Poultry | Sole Owner | 2 Ha | Adult (49 yrs.) | 1–5 yrs. |
| 13. | Tswelopele (Bultfontein) | Vegetables | Family trust | 60 Ha | Youth (31yrs.) | 1–5 yrs. |
| 14. | Nala (Wesselsbron) | Mixed (Aquaponics/Vegetables) | Cooperative | 2 Ha | Adult (58 yrs.) | 1–5 yrs. |
| 15. | Matjhabeng (Odendaalsrus) | Mixed (Dairy/Vegetables) | Sole Owner | 386 Ha | Adult (56 yrs.) | 15–20 yrs. |

Ha: hectarages, Yrs.: years

Lastly, figure 4.3 shows that out of 15 participants, 7, which constitute 47%, are practicing mixed farming that constitutes: crop and livestock, dairy and vegetables. Similarly, 5 out of 15 participants are poultry farmers making up 33%, while only 2 are livestock farmers amounting to 13%. Of the 15 farmers, only 1 is a vegetable farmer, making up 7% of the sampled population.

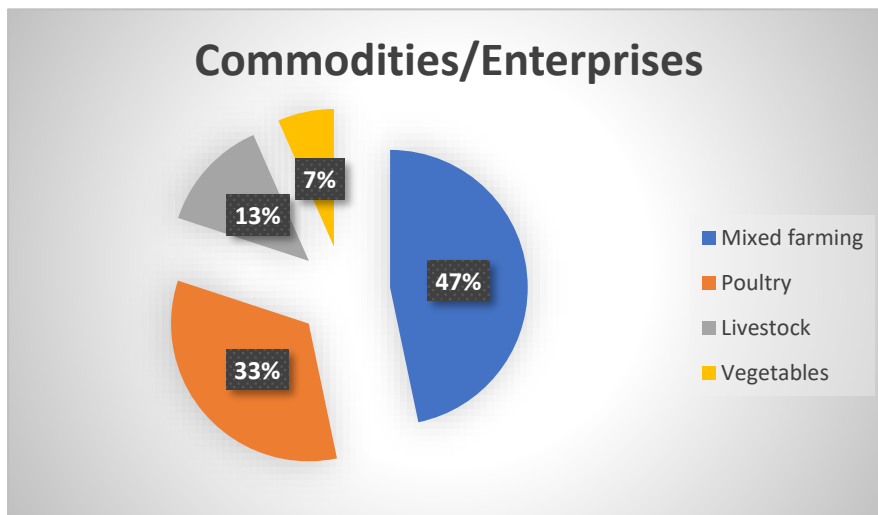


Figure 4.3: Commodities/enterprises within the district municipality of Lejweleputswa

4.3 Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

4.3.1 Findings

Table 4.2 demonstrates the frequency of various themes that were recognised by the researcher from the interviews conducted with women smallholder-farmers in the municipal district of Lejweleputswa. The findings in table 4.2 reveal that the sub-themes occurring the most in the interviews were resources, access to markets and lack of support from organisations.

Table 4.2: Frequency of themes and sub-themes dominant during the interview with participants

| | Themes and Sub-themes | Frequency |
|--------------|--|------------------|
| Theme | Transformation from smallholder farming into commercial farming | 105 |
| Sub-themes | Resources | 24 |
| | Financial Independence | 14 |
| | Cooperatives & Value chains | 13 |
| | Contribution to economic growth (job creation) | 12 |
| | Access to markets | 11 |
| | Lack of support from agricultural organisations | 11 |
| | Contract Farming | 9 |
| | Farm Diversification | 5 |
| | Extension Services | 5 |
| | Skills development | 4 |
| | Government Subsidies/Grants | 3 |

The sub-theme ‘resources’ materialised the most in the research study. Research participants mentioned lack of resources, such as *water, access to land, infrastructure, mechanisation, transportation and access to markets* as underlying constraints hindering transformation to commercial farming. Additional sub-themes that occurred, in the sequence of highest to lowest frequency, were financial independence, cooperatives and value chains, contributing to economic growth, access to markets, lack of support from agricultural organisations, contract farming, farm diversification, Extension Services, skills development and government subsidies. Above mentioned themes are discussed in detail in the chapter.

Table 4.3: Frequency of themes and sub-themes least mentioned during the interview with participants

| | Themes and Sub-themes | Frequency |
|--------------|--|------------------|
| Theme | Transformation from smallholder to commercial farming | 21 |
| Sub-themes | Market prices | 2 |
| | Climate-smart agriculture | 2 |
| | Gender disparities | 1 |
| | Technology | 1 |

The sub-theme technology was the least discussed, although the literature suggests that women smallholder-farmers need to be technologically savvy to access the markets. Other sub-themes that materialised the least, in descending order, are market prices, climate-smart agriculture, gender disparities and technology.

4.4 Sub-themes in the sequence of highest to lowest frequency

4.4.1 Lack of resources

A lack of resources identified by participants who took part in the study include: water, access to finance, access to land, infrastructure, mechanisation and transportation.

4.4.1.1 Water

In most instances, lack of water at the farms was due vandalism. To replace stolen pumps and pipes costs money that the farmers do not have. Lack of water impacts negatively on production. One participant pointed out that she had secured a market for her chickens. However, when they were tested, it was discovered that they lack certain moisture content required by the standards set out by the market, hence she lost the contract.

Sesotho version

'Ha rena metsi mona plasing. Mokoti o teng, empa fela harena pomp. Re kene mona plasing hose ho senyeile, di utswitswe. Jwale, tsatsi le leng le le leng re tlameha hotla re tlatsitse di Jojo kametsi retlo tshella dikgoho tsa rona. Re ile ra lahlehelwa ke mmaraka, ka lebaka la hobahe dikgoho tsa rona di shota metsi mmeleng.' (P10 Poultry Farmer, Matjhabeng; Virginia).

English version

'I do not have any water here at the farm. Yes, we have a borehole, but not a pump. We were given this land by municipality like this, everything was vandalized. Every day we have to fill up Jojo tanks with water and bring them to the farm, so that our chickens can drink water. We found a market for our chickens a while back, but when our chickens were tested, it was discovered that they lacked certain moisture as per market standards.'

Participant (7) faced similar challenges, however she recently received assistance from a government department to restore her water supply.

Sesotho version

'Ke qetile nako e telele hampe ke sena metsi mona plasing. Kene ke sebetsa le babang ba bomme, ho 25 Ha keba aroletse moo baka sebelletsang teng. Emong ona a jala meroho, ha emong ane le kgwebo yadi fariki, empa aba tsamaya ka baka ka hobane hone ho sena metsi. Empa jwale kaha kese kena le metsi, ketla boela ke bitse bomme retlo sebetsa mmoho plasing.' (P7 Poultry Farmer, Matjhabeng: Odendaalsrus).

English version

'I had been without water for a long time. I used to work with other women, each one was allocated a certain portion of land from my 25 Ha. One of them was in piggery production, and the other vegetables. However, due to lack of water at the farm, they decided to stop working. Now that I've been assisted with water, I plan to call them again to start their businesses.'

4.4.1.2 Access to finance

Access to finance is the key to transforming women smallholder to commercial level. Participants explained that having finances at your disposal meant expanding your enterprise, accessing relevant markets both locally and internationally. Some participants have approached commercial banks to apply for a loan. However, they are turned down because they are considered high risk. Hence, participants in the

study lack access to finance, inhibiting their chances of transforming to commercial farming.

Sesotho version

'Bomme ba bangata ba dihoai tse nyane ba hloleha hoya kgwebong e kgolo ka lebaka laho hloka chelete. Hareya dibankeng tse kgolo holo adima chelete, ha ree fumane hobane re kwebong tse nyane. Dibanka di tshaba hore adima, chelete banka hore re kase kgone ho patala sekolo seo. Ke sebetsa ka dikgomo tsa lebese, ha keya banking holo adima chelete, bare baka kgona fela ho nkadima R50 000. Kgomo ele ngwe ke R25 000, jwale ho tshwana fela leha kesa fumana thuso.' (P15 Mixed Farmer, Matjhabeng: Odendaalsrus)

English version

'Most women smallholder-farmers are unable to transform to commercial level due to lack of finances. When we approach commercial banks for a loan, we are not approved because we are considered high risk. I applied for a loan last year and was offered only R50 000. I have Ayrshire cattle (dairy cows), which cost R25 000 each. R50 000 rands is inadequate to cover the costs at the farm.'

4.4.1.3 Access to land

Participants in the study do have access to land, with different hectarages that they acquired either through Land Reform or through a lease agreement with the municipality. The challenge they face is the size (hectarages) of the farm. Most participants want to increase production; however, they are prevented from expanding commodity production by the limited hectarages of their farms. Farmers with livestock have a problem with carrying capacity and those in crop production find that arable land is not adequate to make significant revenue. Those farming with poultry don't have enough land to construct more poultry houses to increase output.

Sesotho version

'Bomme ba bangata haba maemong aho kena kgwebong e kgolo hobane lefatshe hale fumanehe ha bonolo. Lefatshe le ntshuwang ke maspala le lenyane, le thibela bomme ho hola baye kgwebong e kgolo. Lefapha la mafatshe tsela eo ba abelang lefatshe ka teng, ha baso behe bomme ka pele. Bana le kgethollo. Hotswa fela omang, o tseba mang le hore o wela mokgatlong ofeng. Bomme bana le bokgoni, emp aba

sitiswa ke bonyane ba plasi eo ba sebetsang ho yona.’ (P8 Poultry Farmer, Matjhabeng: Odendaalsrus).

English version

‘Majority of woman smallholder farmers do not qualify to transform to commercial farming because it is difficult to access land. Land that is given by Municipalities is too small in hectares. Land allocated by Land Reform does not priorities women farmers. It still discriminates against them. You are allocated land depending on who you are, who you know and the party you affiliate with. Women farmers have potential, but are restricted by the size of the farm to make significant impact.’

Participant (5) reiterates that *‘Government should identify those farmers who are doing well in their businesses and allocate additional land to them for expansion purposes. I need more land to increase my production. I have leased a land from neighbouring farms, about 120Ha to plant crops. However, if I can get additional land, I plan to plant pastures for my livestock because the cost of feed is increasing.’*

Additionally, another participant states that:

Sesotho version

‘Bomme ba dihoai tse nyane bana le mobu o monyane. Sena se sitisa ho hola ha bona. Ka hoo, bomme ha baka fumana lefatshe le ka bang 400 Ha, kemoo teng baka holing. Hobane tlhaiso ya bona e tlabe ele hodimo. Senas eka kenya lebelo hore ba fetohela temong e kgolo.’
(P1 Livestock Farmer, Tokologo: Hertzogville).

English version

‘Women smallholder farmers have access to land, but it is too small which impedes on their growth. If they could be awarded larger farms, at least 400Ha, that is when we can see improvement in production. Bigger farms equal high productivity. Therefore, this can assist to fast-track transformation to commercial farming.’

4.4.1.4 Infrastructure

Infrastructure is considered an important asset in the farming business. For example, a poultry farmer needs a well-ventilated structure to produce broilers/layers of exceptional quality. The same applies for piggery production. The structure should have proper ventilation and drainage for effluent. Most participants in the study

emphasised that low capacity and lack of properly functioning infrastructure impacts greatly on production.

Sesotho version

'Ke ešelletswe hore kgwebo ya temo ebatla dihlaiswa tse ngata. O kekebe wa etsa ntho ele nyane, yaba oe tswellisa pele. Hao hlaisa haholo, ke teng moo oka etsang chelete. Ke nahana hore hanka eketsa meaho yaka ya dikgohi, mohlomong kaba le 2000, ke teng moo nka bonang hore ke tseleng ya ho hola. Empa hona jwale tlhaiso yaka e tlase haholo.' (P12 Poultry Farmers, Matjhabeng: Odendaalsrus).

English version

'I have come to realize that farming business requires high yields in order to make an impact. You cannot produce low quantities and expect growth and revenue. I'm sure if I can expand my poultry business by building two more broiler houses, I will see growth. But for now, production is low.'

Similarly, Participant 1 adds that:

Sesotho version

'Ho hlokeha matlo a basebetsi plasing, hore base patale transport ho tloha le hoyla lekeisheneng tsatsi le leng le le leng. Hape, mesebesti ya polasi e qala hosing haholo, ho betere haba roballetsa polasing.' (P1, Livestock Farmer in Tokologo: Hertzogville).

English version

'Having houses for farm employees is important because it reduces cost of travelling to and from the farm every day. In addition, farm activities start very early in the morning, therefore having them at the farm enables us to complete important tasks for the day.'

4.4.1.5 Mechanisation

Participants in various commodities regard mechanisation as a tool required to transform into commercial farming. Crop producers highlighted that time is of the essence in the farming business. A farmer needs to have all the machinery in place for timeous planting and for the harvesting season. Not harvesting on time can have a negative impact on your products. However, participants in the study do not have

access to mechanisation, therefore opting to hire and pay contractors to perform the task.

Sesotho version

'Lemo se fitileng neke jetse sunflower ho, yaba ka nako ya kotula ke hira kontraka ho nkotulela hobane hakena harvestara. Ke sokotse haholo hobane contractara ene etla lata, ebe sebetsa hanyane. Sunflower hae batle ho dula nako e telele esa kotulwe hobane oli ya teng ya omella letsatsing. Jwale yaba hake isa sunflower marakeng, boleng ba yona bone bo theuhile haholo.' (P6, Mixed farmer, Matjhabeng: Welkom).

English version

'Last year I planted sunflower on my farm. When time came to harvest, I had to hire and pay contractor with harvesting machine. However, he came to the farm late and would work for a short period of time. With sunflower, when it's time to harvest you have to harvest because the oil dries when left out in the sun for too long. This had an impact on the value of my sunflower when I went to sell it at the market.'

Another participant agrees that when you do not have machinery, you are left with no option but to hire a contractor to do such tasks. That also bears risk because if the contractor is hired by five other farmers and must attend to them before coming to you, then you run the risk of falling behind with the planting or harvesting.

Sesotho version

'Ho hira kontraka ke chelete. Hoba le michini ho thusa rapolasi hoba nakong, yaho jala le yaho kotula. Jwale hao hira kontraka e tlamehang hoyo hobo rapolasi ba bang. Maya a fihla ho wena mohlomong di pula diana, ebe jwale haa kgone hokena masimong ka baka la diretse. O salla morao ole rapolasi.' (P8 Poultry Farmer, Matjhabeng: Odendaalsrus).

'To hire a contractor costs money. Having your own machinery means you are always on time for both planting and harvesting season. In addition, hiring a contractor with four other farmers on the list, is risky. If by the time the contractor is ready to work at your farm, the rains start, then you will have to wait until the fields are dry again.'

4.4.1.6 Transportation

Transportation of goods to the markets is an essential element when running a commercial farming business. Some of the participants have to hire and pay transport to take their products to the market. Five participants in the study, making up 33%, sell their products in formal markets, while the remaining 10, representing 67%, sell at informal markets.

For a vegetable producer it is even more critical that produce is transported to market immediately after harvesting:

Sesotho version

'Ha rena dipalangwa ho tsamaisa dihlaiswa tsa rona, Rekga meroho ebe ree tsamaisa kadi kolotsana(wheelbarrow) hoisa lekeisheneng. Ha reka fumana vene-nyaya ho tsamaisa meroho ya rona re ka fihlela batho ba bangata ka sebaka se senyane.' (P13 Vegetable Farmer, Tselopele: Bultfontein).

English version

'We do not have transport to take our vegetables to the market. We load our vegetable on wheelbarrows and walk to the township to sell them. We try by all means to deliver them while they are still fresh. If we can get a small bakkie, we can sell to a lot of people in a short space of time.'

(P11 Livestock farmer in Tokologo Hertzogville), with access to formal market explains:

Sesotho version

'Ke lehlohonolo hobane kontraka eo kenang le yona le Sernik, eba tlama hore batlo lata dikgomo mona plasing. Jwale nna hake tshwenyehe haholo ka taba ya transport.' (P1 Livestock Farmer, Tokologo: Hertzogville)

English version

'I am lucky because the contract that I have allows them (cattle producers) to come and load cattle from my farm. I do not have to worry about transporting my cattle to the market.'

4.4.2 Financial independence

Nine out of fifteen women smallholder-farmers felt that by transforming to commercial farming they could become financially independent and improve the living standards of family members and the community. Additionally, they see the transformation as a way to contribute to the economy of the country by creating jobs and fighting poverty.

Sesotho version:

‘Ha kele kgwebong e kgolo kea tseba hore lekeno leo kele etsang kaho rekisa dikgoho nka kgona ho ikemela. Ka ikahela le ntlo, leho patella bana universiting.’ (P3 Poultry Farmer, Masilonyana: Verkeerdeveil).

English version

‘By transforming to commercial farming, my poultry business can make significant revenue. I can build a nice house and manage to pay university tuition for my children.’

Another participant added:

Sesotho version

‘Hake ikemetse katsa chelete, ke kgona ho reka disebediswa tsa plasi ka kontane ntle leho etsa dikiloto.’ (P6 Mixed Farmer, Matjhabeng: Welkom).

English Version:

‘When I’m financially independent, I can buy implements for the farm cash, without making any debts.’

4.4.3 Women cooperatives and value chains

The purpose of creating cooperatives is to assist farmers participate in the current value chains through the provision of information and technical support, as a collective. All participants in the study agreed that working together could have a positive impact on their businesses. However, not in a cooperative set-up but the value-chain system.

Sesotho version

'Bomme ba kgona ho atleha haba etsa di society/ stockvels, empa haretla temong hake nahane ke monahano o motle hoba kopanya. Ba sebetsa hantle haho tluwa ho stockvel moo ba tshellanang, leho bolokeng chelete etla arolwa ha selemo se fela. Empa ha ele kgwebong ya temo, ba hloleha, ke investment, otlameha ho ema. Le hore temo ena le di risk tse kgata. Hape, bana le di group dynamics, tse tlisang dikgotlagotlano.' (P8 Poultry Farmer: Matjhabeng Odendaalsrus)

English version

'Women are good at partnering for the purpose of funeral or groceries "stockvels". They work well when money is put away to be shared at the end of the year. However, farm business requires that you work and get revenue at a later stage. This set-up has proven to be disastrous for many cooperatives. They also can't stand the risks that come with farming.'

Additionally, 10 participants think that the system that can be beneficial for businesses is forming a chain by buying and selling to each other.

Sesotho version

'Dijo tsa di phoofolo diya tura. Jwale kaha rele bomme, hore re hole, reka thusana. Ha lefapha le thusitse e momg wa bomme ka homo jalla pone. Rona rele dihwai tsa dikgoho reka reka dijo tsa dikgoho ho yena. Re kgaotse hoye koporasi holo reka dijo tsa diphoofolo.' (P4 Poultry Farmer, Masilonyana: Verkeerdevlei).

English version

'Feed is expensive. I think to grow in our businesses as women smallholder farmers, we need to assist each other. We can achieve this by selling and buying our produce from each other. For instance, if the department has planted maize for one farmer, we poultry farmers can buy from such crop farmer. We'll stop going to the big firms and this linkage will save us a lot of money.'

Another farmer agrees that such linkages can be beneficial in their transformation to commercial farming:

Sesotho version

'Ke dumela hore rele bomme reka hola, ra kena di kgwebong tse kgolo. Ha fela lefapha leka kenya tshebetsong mokgwa wa hore ha kena ke dikgomo , mmuso o rekele mme yaneng atlo fumana dithuso selemong seno. Baka romela ngaka yadi phoofolo hodi hlahloba. Lenna nka

kgona ho tsheetsa mme ya thusitsweng, kamo arolela tsebo yaka kadi kgomo. Mmuso ose rekele rapolasi dikgomo ho dikgwebo tse kgolo ntse rele teng, ledi kgomo tsa rona ele tsa maemo a hodimo.’ (P1 Livestock Farmer, Tokologo: Hertzogville).”

English version

‘I believe that as women smallholder farmers, we can transform to commercial farming. That can only happen if agricultural department can link its farmers with each other. When one of the farmers is earmarked to receive grant to procure cattle, then I can be identified as a supplier of cattle, and they can procure from me. They can send their VETs to come and assess my cattle before procurement. When the transaction is through, I can guide and support the farmer who received my cattle and share my knowledge of cattle breeding with her. Government shouldn’t buy cattle from large commercial farmers, while we can also render such services.’

(P11 Poultry Farmer, Matjhabeng: Welkom) further adds:

Sesotho version

‘Tshebedisano mmoho etla ka mekgwa e mengata e fapaneng. Mohlala, ha mmaraka o batla palo e itseng ya dihlaiswa, ebe nna kena le bonyane bo itseng. Ke moo, reka ikopanyang tem ho fihlela palo e batlwang ke mmaraka. Ka hoo re kgona ho una molemo kaofela. Empa sena rekase fihlela ha fela re arolelana tsebo.’

English version

‘Partnerships come in different forms. For example, if the markets require a certain quantity of produce(chickens) and I cannot deliver, we as poultry farmers can combine our chickens to meet the demand from the market. This way we share the profits and keep the market. But this can only happen if we share information.’

4.4.4 To contribute to the economic growth

The Covid-19 pandemic increased the unemployment rate and left many children without parents. Hence, participants in the study think that transforming to commercial farming could give them a platform to create jobs and in turn contribute to the economy of the country.

Sesotho version

'Hoya kgwebong e kgolo ho bolela hore nka theha mesebetsi, ka hira bomme ba senang lekeno. Hape, nka kwetlisa le bana ba senang batswadi ka lebaka la Covid-19 hore hobe le ho hong-nyana baka ho tholang ho ja katlung.' (P1: Livestock Farmer, Tokologo: Hertzogville)

English version

'Transforming to commercial farming means that I can create jobs, employ all those women without any kind of income. I would also train the youth who lost parents due to Covid-19, so that they acquire skills and earn income to contribute in the household.'

Similarly, participant 12 stated that:

Sesotho version

'Kgwebo e kgolo e hloka hore o hire batho hore mosebetsi otlo tsamaya ka pele. Batho ba bangata ba dutse malapeng kante ho mesebetsi. Ho etsa mesebetsi hoka fokotsa le bofuma boo rebo bonang makeisheneng a rone.' (P12 Poultry Farmer, Matjhabeng: Odendaalsrus).

English version

'Commercial farming needs one to employ more people at the farm, to complete activities in time. A lot of people are unemployed and employing them would reduce poverty we see in our communities.'

4.4.5 Access to the markets

Through market access, the lives of women smallholder farmers improve and productivity increases. Markets can either be formal (signed contracts) or informal (no signed contracts).

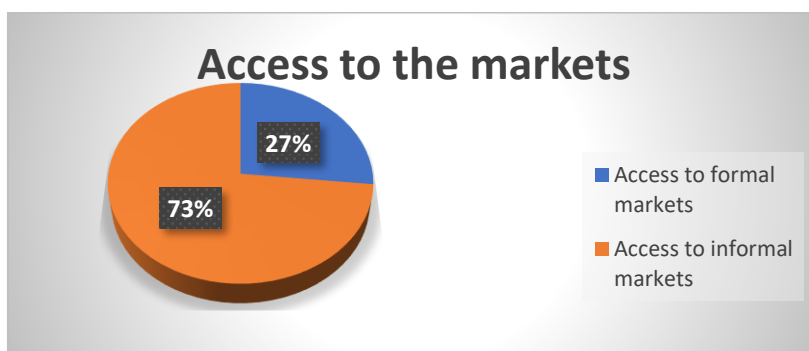


Figure 4.4: Access to the markets

Figure 4.5 depicts participants with signed contracts making up 27% of the population sampled, while 73% are in informal markets. Participants had different opinions as to their access to the markets. Some participants felt that complying with the requirements set by the markets makes access easy. However, others felt that those standards are difficult to achieve, hence their participation in informal markets.

Sesotho version

'Mmuso ha oka re thusa ho bua ledi mmaraka tse kgolo hore re kgone ho isa dihlaiswa tsa rona teng. Maemo(standards) are beuweng kedi mmarakaa hodimo Haholo, hare kgone oa fihlela. Ke moo jwale rei phumanang re rekisa dihlaiswa tsa rona ho "informal markets".Ke rekisa dikgoho lekeisheneng, matsatsi a mang kea palalwa hake rekisitse, a mang batho banka sekoloto. Ke iphumana ke lahlehetswe ke chelete e ngata ke batho ba etsang dikoloto.'
(P12 Poultry Farmer, Matjhabeng: Odendaalsrus).

English version

'Government needs to intervene on our behalf and negotiate with the formal markets to allow us access to sell our products. The required standards placed by the formal markets are too high and we are unable to reach them, hence we turn to the informal markets. I sell my chickens at the township, sometimes I get paid and sometimes people promise to pay later in the month. I end up losing a lot of money because of this.'

To reiterate what P10 (Mixed farmers, Matjhabeng: Virginia) previously said,

Sesotho version

'Mmaraka ona rea o fumana, empa fela hare kgone ho fihlela maemo a bewang kedi mmaraka tse kgolo.'

English version

'We do have access to formal markets; however, the quality of our products is not up to the standards set by the market.'

On the contrary, participants with partnerships with private entities do not experience difficulties accessing the markets.

'I have a five-year contract with one of the biggest cattle producers in the province. The contract stipulated that I receive 40 cattle in the beginning, and every year my partner takes

40% of the calves while I keep 60%. They are renting my land; hence medication and feed is at their cost. From this initiative I can sell my cattle anywhere because they are of good quality.' (P4 Mixed farmers, Masilonyana: Brandfort).

4.4.6 Support from agricultural organisations

There are various agricultural organisations in South Africa with the objective of developing and supporting farmers who participate in commercial farming. Three of the participants who took part in the study revealed that they have cancelled their membership with various farming organisations. They explained that they do not receive any assistance or support from such organisations in times of need. Furthermore, they clarified that they comply and pay annual membership fees, but do not benefit in any way. They believe there is a lot that these organisations can do to improve the farming sector in the country.

Sesotho version

'Ke bona mekgatlo yabo rapolasi ele yona ere diehisang ho hola kgwebong ena ya rona. Neke chelletswe ke polasi, yaba ke tlalehela mokgatlo, empa habaka ba nthusa ka letho. Ke fumane thuso ho baahisane, ka honka dikgomo tsaka dilo fulela ka polasing tsa bona. Chelete eo ree patalang ka selemo eka re thusa ya re rekela disebediswa dipolasing.' (P1 Livestock Farmer, Tokologo: Hertzogville).

English version

'I think that these agricultural organisations are the ones delaying our progress. Last year there were veld fires at my farm, I reported the matter to the organisations and did not receive any help. Instead, I was helped by neighbours who are also farmers. They let my cattle graze in theirs farms until I was ready to take them back. I also feel that the annual fee we pay every year can assist some women farmers by buying implements for them.'

P5 Mixed farmers, Masilonyana: Brandfort, collaborates with P1 by saying:

'We face a lot of issues as women smallholder-farmers, and I just feel that the right people should be addressing our issues. Which is something that these organisations are not doing. For instance, they have database of all the farmers from different commodities. For those in crop production, because planting season is approaching, they should be able negotiate with

government to subsidize us on diesel and fertilizer because prices have increased. We do not need 100% subsidy, just enough to make profit.'

Another participant added:

Sesotho version

'Ho thusa bomme diphepetsong tseo ba tobaneng le tsona, ho hlokahala mokgatlo. Mokgatlo ona o tlameha ho ikarabella leho shebana ledi thloko tsa dihwai tsabo mme. O etse bonnete ba hore ba mamela leho thusa dihwai tsa bomme. Ba netefatse le hore polasi hae fuwe motho fela ya senang maikemisetso.' (P8 Poultry Farmer, Matjhabeng: Odendaalsrus)

English version

'There needs to be an organisation that only deals with the challenges faced by women farmers. This organisation needs to focus and come up with solutions to the issues inhibiting the growth and progress of women farmers. They should also ensure that land is given to those women with the serious intentions.'

4.4.7 Contract farming

As discussed previously in chapter two, contract farming is an agreement between a farm producer and a buyer. Sometimes the buyer stipulates the volume and the prices, and the farmer commits to delivering such at a set date. Contract farming or strategic partnerships have seen the businesses of participants taking part in the study grow and flourish. Four out of fifteen participants have some form of partnership with the formal markets due to contract farming. Farmers involved in contract farming are expected to attend workshops and training in order to maintain the standards required by the markets.

Sesotho version

'Jwalo kaha kese ke boletse, dikamahano ke ntho tsa bohlokwa haholo. Ke ikamahantse ke firm e kgolo ya dikgomo. Ke tsamaya dikwetliso hore na dikgomo di tshwarwa jwang, di fepuwa jwang, ke efe meriana edi loketseng, jwalo, jwalo.' (P1 Livestock farmer, Tokologo, Herzogville).

English version

'As previously mentioned, partnerships are very important in farming business. I have a contract with cattle producing company. Part of the agreement is that I attend workshops and training on cattle production. I have learned a lot on how to farm with cattle, how and when to feed, which medication is suitable for the cattle, etc.'

P15, Dairy farmer from Matjhabeng: Welkom agrees that contract farming can actually assist them avoid the formation of a monopoly.

Sesotho version

'Ke dumela hore hareka ikopanya rele bo rapolasi ba lebese rekaya hole haholo ka kgwebo ena. Hareka kopana rele bahlano ebe re kopanya lebese larona, hore production ebe hodimo. Rebe rele process, hobane hona jwale rena le bothatha ba monopoly. Di kgwebo tse kgolo di nka lebese ho rona ka chelete e tlase, ebe bona bale process and pasteurize ebe bale rekisa ka chele e hodimo.'

English version

'I believe that if we can group ourselves as dairy farmers in the area, we can grow our businesses. If there can be five of us and we combine our quantities of milk, have the milk processed and pasteurised. Then get a contract from a big company that can take our milk, because currently we have a serious challenge of monopoly from these big companies. They take our milk cheap, process, pasteurise and sell it at a higher price.'

4.4.8 Farming diversity

Farming diversification is when a farmer expands the scope of farm activities by adding more enterprises/commodities to the one already in place, in an attempt to access different markets and increase farm revenue.

Demographics of participants who took part in the study indicate that 47% are mixed farmers. This type of farming includes different kinds of enterprises such as dairy and vegetables, livestock and crop, poultry, and vegetables, and so forth. Participants have explained that diversifying their enterprises increases revenue. If and when one commodity does not perform as well as expected, the other commodity can carry operation costs.

Sesotho version

'Bomme ba tlameha ho tseba hore polasi hae sebetse ka enterprise ele ngwe. Ditlameha hoba pedi kapa tharo hore ditle di tshehetsane. Kgwebo ya temo e hloka hod ula ena le lekeno selemo ho pota. Eskaba taba yah ore hona le lekeno ka June le July fela haho kotulwa pone. Empa hape hobe le lekeno hao rekisa manamane ka April/May. Ka hoo ona le lekeno ha badi fela selemong. Empa haona le serapa sa meroho ka dikgoho, oka kgona ho fumana lekona kgafetsa wa patala le basebetsi.' (P8 Poultry Farmer, Matjhabeng: Odendaalsrus)

English version

'Women smallholder farmers have to know and understand that you cannot run a farming business with only one enterprise. You need two or three enterprises in order to survive. As a farmer, you cannot rely on maize harvest profits in June/July. And auctioning of calves in April/May. That means you only have income twice a year. But if you also have vegetables or poultry, you can sell these throughout the year and manage to pay your workers.'

(P6 Mixed Farmer, Matjhabeng: Welkom) adds that with climate change, one cannot be looking at one enterprise to transform to commercial farming.

Sesotho version

'Hore kgwebo ya temo ya bomme e hole, ho hlokahala hore o shebe ntho e kenyang lekenole hodimo polasing. O tlameha hoba le kgwebo tse ding tseo odi etsang hobane okase tsebe hore hotla etsahalang ka peo eo oe tsetetseng. Hao jale pone kapa sunflower, o tlameha hoba le se seng se tshehetsang jwalo ka meroho.'

English version

'For our businesses to grow as smallholder farmers, we need to diversify our enterprises. You need to look enterprises that brings in more profits. With climate change, farming is unpredictable. You might cultivate today, only to experience floods or droughts later and lose everything. But if you plant your crops and have poultry as well, it can assist when such disasters occur.'

However, Participant 4 argues that having too many enterprises or commodities can prove detrimental to the business.

'I do not like mixing too many enterprises at my farm because the capital/profits you get from the struggling enterprise(livestock) you use for vegetable production to avoid losing the market. The one(livestock) struggling doesn't get the opportunity to thrive, hence you do not

get a chance to see which enterprise works best for your farm.’ (P4 Mixed Farmer, Masilonyana: Brandfort).

4.4.9 Extension Services

Extension Services are meant to advise our farmers in decision making with regards to farming activities, sharing information about the markets and the new trends, amongst others. However, some of the participants do not receive enough support from their Agricultural Advisors, while some feel that the guidance they receive has assisted them in their businesses.

‘In the past I was not happy with my Agricultural Advisor. I know that their duty is to make sure that my farm business improves. They know better; hence they should be able to share relevant information with us. For instance, as a new farmer you are not aware of the services offered my department, such as agricultural economics, engineering, research etc. Such information assists a lot when faced with matters that need such expertise. However, they do not assist on such important matters. Luckily, I now have a new advisor, we work well together.’ (P4, Mixed Farmer, Masilonyana: Brandfort).

(P5 Mixed Farmer, Masilonyana: Brandfort) had different experience and explains:

‘I had both sheep and cattle on my farm. My carrying capacity was too low and my advisor suggested that I focus only on Merino sheep and get rid of the cattle. I now have more sheep that bring in good revenues after sheering. I will be selling wool and plan to save up for feed. I’ve managed to buy John Deere tractor to use for planting of pastures for my sheep.’

4.4.10 Skills development

Empowering women smallholder-farmers with agricultural skills guarantees an increase in production, which then contributes to economic growth and job creation.

Participants who took part in the study are all in agreement that skills development is necessary for the growth of their businesses. All participants have attended either workshop training or a seminar to acquire skills and knowledge about their different enterprises, as well as learn about trends and markets that are available to them. The private and public sector are working hard to make theoretical and practical knowledge accessible to women smallholder-farmers.

Sesotho version

'Hore retle rematlafale dikgwebong tsa rona, re tlameha ho tsamaya dithupello ka mefuta. Nna ke rata ho ithuta empa , nke re rate leho etsa seo kei thutile sona "practically". Kgwebo e kekebe ya sebetsa hantle ha motho wa mme a dutse fela asaye dithupellong.' (P1 Livestock Farmer, Tokogo: Hertzogville).

English version

'To grow our businesses, we as women smallholder farmers need to attend some sort of training or workshops. I enjoy learning, but I like practical work because that's how I improve my skills. Our businesses cannot grow if we do not expose ourself to the environment of learning.'

Another farmer further adds that smart agriculture is fast becoming the norm and farmers need to acquaint themselves with this to be able to participate in formal markets.

'Farmers need to attend trainings and workshops to expand their knowledge. Attending such trainings, you learn about new technologies that are available out there to improve production. I have recently learned that COVITA is trying to come up with the seed for grains(sunflower/maize) that can grow during droughts and floods.' (P5 Mixed Farmer, Masilonyana: Brandfort).

In addition, according to one farmer, training or workshops offer exposure to market demands for farm producers.

Sesotho version

'Re hloka hoya dithupellong hore re tsebe dihlaiswa tsa rona di tlameha hoba maemong a jwang hore di fihlelle maemo a bewang kedi mmaraaka.' (P11, Poultry Farmer, Matjhabeng: Odendaalsrus).

English version

'We need to attend training, to learn more about what specifics are required in order to access the formal markets.'

4.4.11 Government subsidies/grants

The government of South Africa offers programmes that provide grants to previously disadvantaged individuals (farmers), for items such as land, mechanisation, infrastructure and production inputs. For instance, those individuals who want to farm must apply for land through the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development grant. After the land is issued, individuals can apply to the Department of Agriculture, through the CASP/Ililima grant for assistance in mechanisation, infrastructure, and production inputs.

Twelve out of fifteen participants received such grants in the form of infrastructure, production inputs, planting of pasture and livestock. All participants in the study believe that government grants make a positive impact on their businesses.

Sesotho version

‘Dithuso tse tswang mafapheng , haholo la temo dika thusa bomme ho phahamisa hlaiswa tsa bona hore ba kgone ho kena kgwebong e kgolo. Dithoso tseno di kenya meaho, disebediswa, jwalo-jwalo.’ (P15, Mixed Farmer, Matjhabeng: Odendaalsrus).

English version

‘Subsidies, such as those given by agricultural department can assist in increasing production for women smallholder farmers. These include: infrastructure, mechanisation and production inputs.’

Participant (P4, Mixed Farmer: Masilonyana: Brandfort) said, ‘According to the business plan, my farm required R7 million to be fully functional. However, Department could only assist me with R2 million from their ILLIMA Grant, and I’m not fully capacitate. I know there are risks involved in fully funding a farmer, but how am I expected to grow? If you are giving someone money to start a business and you only give her half of what is being asked, rather give out the full amount because you are setting up a farmer for a failure.’

Additionally, one participant felt that the reason women smallholder farmers do not receive adequate assistance from Government is because there’s no clear criteria in terms of who qualifies for the assistance.

Sesotho version

'Mmuso o tlameha ho hlakisa "criteria" eo eo sebedisang ho hlwaya batho bao eba thusang. Hore na o rekelwa mobu kapa o thuswa ka disebediswa. Ba bangata batho hona jwale ba dutseng ka mobu empa aba sao sebedisi. Babang ba fumana dithuso lemo se seng le se seng, ha b aba bang basadi fumane. Tlhakiso haele teng hore dithuso difumanwa jwang, hoka thusa haholo.' (P8, Poultry Farmers, Matjhabeng: Odendaalsrus)

English version

'Government should make its criteria clear, as to how and who gets grants. Whether its grant for land or production inputs. A lot of people have land but not utilising it. Others are receiving grants one after the other and others not at all. Having clear guidelines will really be helpful.'

4.5 Discussion

The objective of the study was to identify critical success factors that contribute to the transformation of women smallholder-farmers into commercial farmers. Diiro et al. (2018) suggest that the transformation could result in an increase in productivity, therefore enhancing food security, reducing poverty, as well as boost income.

Results gathered from the fieldwork as provided by participants through the interviews, suggest that there are 11 themes that are significant in the transformation from smallholder to commercial farming. These are: lack of resources, financial independence, cooperatives and value chains contributing to the economy of the country, access to markets, lack of support from organisations, contract farming, farm diversification, Extension Services, skills development and government subsidies/grants.

The sub-theme, lack of resources, was dominant in the study. All participants explained that a lack of resources could negatively impact the quality and quantity of their farm produce. These varied from water, infrastructure, transportation, mechanisation and others. P10 lost the market due to a lack of water at the farm. Both the field study and the literature give in-depth information on challenges faced by women smallholder-farmers citing lack of resources among them. Furthermore, problems such as limited access to the markets, high costs and a limited approach to improved inputs and production technologies are faced by the sector (Dzvimbo et al., 2017).

Financial independence was the second theme that took dominance in the study. Participants highlighted that with transformation comes financial independence. This enables them to change the living conditions of their families and communities for the better. Sindira Chetty (2016) agrees that transforming to commercial farming can boost a woman's earnings and enrich the well-being of her children. Similarly, Maryellen Kennedy Duckett (n.d.) suggests that empowering women in agriculture to accomplish their highest economic potential could help feed the hungry. The findings in this study with respect to financial independence are echoed in the literature.

The sub-theme with the third highest frequency was cooperatives and value chains. Cooperatives are meant to give women smallholders an opportunity to access markets easily. Gashaw and Kibret (2018) state that agricultural cooperatives assist smallholder farmers to overcome challenges that prohibit them from taking advantage of their businesses. However, participants in the study, particularly those in a single ownership set-up felt they work better on their own, but would like to form partnerships with other women smallholder farmers by creating a value chain of buying and selling farm produce to each other. P8 agrees that women are good at 'stockvels', where they save up and share at the end of the year, but not good at working together in farming operations. Participants prefer working together in value chains where they can sell and buy from each other to reduce costs they incur with larger companies. For example, a crop producer can sell fodder to a livestock producer. Literature refers to value chains between formal/informal markets and farm producers, however, it does not elaborate on value chains between farmers. Hence, there is a need for further research on this topic.

Contributing to economic growth was also given as an advantage of transforming to commercial farming, ultimately leading to an increase in productivity. Creation of jobs by farmers contributes enormously to economic growth, in addition to food production. Sindira Chetty (2016), mentions that empowerment also allows women to take part in financially enhancing activities that contribute to the economy of the country. Additionally, Ferdousi et al. (2020) report that farming offers income opportunities and options to export, therefore creating employment prosperities.

Having access to the markets was the fifth sub-theme that participants thought made an impact in the transformation to commercial farming. GC and Hall (2020) indicates that it is important that farmers have access to market information such as prices, products and what is in demand. P12 interjected that government needs to intervene on their behalf to negotiate with formal markets to allow them access to sell their produce, because they are struggling to meet the market standards. However, four participants (two mixed producers, one dairy producer and one livestock producer) out of the fifteen have managed to secure contracts with formal markets. Additionally, women farmers not participating in the markets inhibit transformation to commercial farming and leads to a small contribution to economic growth and little welfare boost

(Mbitsemunda & Karangwa, 2017). Hence, findings from the study support the conclusion found in the literature.

Agricultural organisations can be regarded as links between government and farmers or markets and farmers. However, P1 believes that the very same organisations are delaying the interviewee's progress to commercial farming. Moreover, farming organisations do not contribute to the growth of their members, P4 highlighted that the challenges they face as members are not being addressed by the right people. There is not much literature on agricultural organisations and their members, therefore there is a need for further research on the role agricultural organisations play in the development and support of women smallholder-farmers.

Contract farming appeared as the seventh sub-theme with the high frequency. Such contracts can be regarded as a key success factor for women smallholder-farmers transforming to commercial farming. The contract the farmer engages in, guarantees that her produce will have a market. Dubbert (2019) emphasises that contract farming is regarded as a way of assisting women farmers to participate in the markets. Moreover, it plays a role in better levels of agricultural output and thereby enhances the income of farmers. P1 attests to this by stating that the contract she has with cattle producers has given her a chance to expand her knowledge in cattle production therefore improving the quality of her produce.

Diversifying farm activities can influence the farm outputs and fast-track the transformation of women farmers into commercial farmers. P8 agrees that as a farmer you need different enterprises running concurrently, because they can sustain each other through the impacts of climate change. Moreover, as a farmer you should not depend on one commodity/enterprise, but diversify because the farming business is unpredictable(P6). Although a lot of farmers are venturing into different enterprises and commodities, there is inadequate literature on the subject.

Extension Services can be regarded as a vehicle between the farmer and government. Agricultural advisors are regarded as pivotal forefront workers giving farmers motivation and important information. P5 highlights that an Agricultural Advisor assisted her in making important decisions regarding livestock production at the farm, and that this decision has seen her business flourish. Similarly, Makate and Makate

(2019) indicates that linkages to Extension Services positively impacts on the farmers' ability to adapt new technologies.

All participants in the study agreed that skills development enhances the ability to transform to commercial farming. Motivating women to embrace new learning techniques and innovative applications sparked interest in the farming community. Sarker et al. (2021) state that a noticeable impact brought by these interventions included the rise in crop production and an increased earning. Furthermore, P5 highlights that attending training and workshops expands knowledge about new technologies that are available to improve production. By equipping women farmers with information and education this permits transformation from smallholder farming to small-scale commercial farming.

Government subsidies/ grants are meant to assist farmers with access to land, resources such as water, mechanisations, infrastructure, production inputs, and others. The study found that most participants relied heavily on this particular sub-theme. Most participants from the study have received some form of subsidy from government, while others hope that someday they will be fortunate enough to receive such. P15 confirms that she was subsidised with 25 Ayrshire cattle and a fully equipped dairy structure to expand her business because she was struggling with proper infrastructure to milk her cows. However, P12 aspires to receive such grants so that she can grow her poultry business. She reports that as farmers they do apply for such grants, but with no luck. Additionally, Ijatuyi and Oladele (2021) report that in South Africa, in an effort to correct previous injustices, the government developed various financial models to support emerging black farmers for agricultural growth and empowerment.

4.6 Implications for Future Research

The findings of the study provide important theoretical and practical elements to be considered to support the transformation from smallholder farming to commercial farming. According to the theoretical perspective, the findings raise the fact that there is insufficient research on the lack of support from agricultural organisations, as well as women smallholder value chains between farmers. From the practical viewpoint the study outlined challenges that hinder the transformation from smallholder farmers to

commercial farmers and factors that could possibly fast-track the process. Furthermore, both private and public sectors should collaborate in the development of women smallholder farmers to increase the number of women commercial farmers which could have a positive ripple effect on the local communities and the country at large.

4.7 Conclusion

Several sub-themes appeared in the study. These are lack of resources, financial independence, contributing to the economy of the country, access to markets, lack of support from agricultural organisations, contract farming, farm diversification, Extension Services, skills development, cooperatives and value chains. Transformation of women smallholder-farmers into commercial farmers brings an improvement in productivity. Furthermore, it allows women better access to the markets, better management of finances and expertise to boosts sale and cash income. Profits from such allow women to provide a good education for their children. However, for women smallholder farmers to flourish in their businesses, an appropriate and supportive environment should be developed and implemented. This can be achieved by availing the necessary resources to their disposal.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on the literature review and the data collected from the field. It consolidates all the previous chapters and makes recommendations as to what needs to be done to ensure that women smallholder farmers transform into commercial farmers.

5.2 Research Objectives

5.2.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of the study is to identify critical success factors that contribute to the successful transformation of women smallholder-farmers into commercial farmers.

5.2.2 Secondary objectives

The secondary objectives of the study are: to outline why women smallholder farms need to move into commercial farming, to investigate constraints that prevent this transformation, and to understand the success factors contributing to the transformation.

However, prior to commencing with the recommendations and conclusion of the study, below follows a short discussion as to whether objectives identified have been accomplished:

Objective 1: to outline why women smallholder-farmers need to transform to commercial farming

Participants from the study stated numerous reasons as to why it is imperative to transform to commercial farming. Reasons included; the ability to contribute to the economic growth through creation of job and also, becoming financially independent therefore improving the living standards of family members and the community at large. Similarly, literature from Chapter 2 also concurred with the views of participants in the study.

Objective 2: to investigate constraints that prevent the transformation of women smallholder-farmers into commercial farmers

Findings from the study identified resources such as water, access to land, transportation, access to finance, mechanization, transportation and access to the markets as challenges faced by women farmers in their quest to farming commercially. Furthermore, participants stated lack of support from agricultural organisation and extension services as hindrances in their progress. Similar constraints have been identified by different scholar from different parts of the world, as discussed in the literature.

Objective 3: to define the success factors contributing to the transformation of women smallholder-farmers into commercial farming

Factors that participants considered as imperative to the success of the transformation include women participating in cooperatives, taking part in contract farming, receiving government incentives, skill development and diversifying farm enterprises. Likewise, the literature coincides with participants' observations.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

The first chapter introduced women smallholder farmers transforming into commercial farmers as a research topic. The chapter explored farming practices internationally and in the continent of Africa. The chapter further discussed challenges women smallholder-farmers experience with competitive commercial farming. Lejweleputswa District Municipality was introduced as the area of focus where these women farmers carry out their farming activities. The chapter also delved into the impact the sector of farming has on the economy of the country. Furthermore, the schemes available to empower women smallholder farmers in fast-tracking their pace of transformation to commercial farming were discussed. The chapter also outlined the problem statement and objectives of the study, described the scope of the study and described the selection process of participants, including the basis for selection. Additionally, the definition of smallholder and commercial farming was mentioned in the chapter.

The second chapter centred on the literature review on women smallholder-farmers. The reasons that women smallholder farmers should transform to commercial farming

were mentioned and discussed. In addition, challenging constraints preventing women from commercial farming were listed and debated at length. However, even though challenges exist, there are also success factors that contribute to the transformation and such were highlighted and summarised in the chapter. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the conducive environment for commercial farming. Factors indicating progress in the transformation were listed and analysed.

The third chapter focused on the research methodology adopted and its application on the analysis of data collected through the interview process. The study used qualitative research, adopting semi-structured interviews due to its effectiveness on the costs and time. To align to the research study, the design was chosen to give the required outcomes. Moreover, non-probability sampling and purposive sampling were regarded as appropriate for the study and chosen as the sampling strategy. The 15 participants were selected based on their knowledge in their respective enterprises and the contribution they could make to the study because of their experience in the farming sector. This was achieved by using the 15 semi-structured interviews affording participants the chance to give detailed descriptions and the researcher an opportunity to probe for more information. Methods used to collect data were discussed and ethical considerations applied in the study were mentioned. These were informed consent, honesty, favourable risk-benefit and information confidentiality.

Chapter four of the study consisted of a summary of the interviews conducted with selected participants. The 11 main themes acquired from the interviews with participants were analysed in detail, and these include: lack of resources, financial independence, cooperatives and value chains, contribution to the economy and to economic growth, access to markets, lack of support from agricultural organisations, contract farming, farm diversification, Extension Services, skills development and government subsidies/grants. Women smallholder farmers transforming into commercial farmers leads to financial independence, in turn, improvement in the living standards of their families. However, most are faced with constraining challenges such as access to resources, access to the markets, amongst others. To fast-track the transformation to commercial farming, stumbling blocks will have to be removed and success factors such as contract farming, involvement in value chains and availability of government subsidies/grants be incorporated into frameworks that can assist

women smallholder-farmers. An in-depth analysis was conducted after interpretation of the data and gaps in the study were identified.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

This section presents recommendations on what is required to ensure that women smallholder-farmers start to transform into commercial farmers, to make a significant contribution to economic growth.

5.4.1 Lack of resources

Resources are fundamental for the structure and function of agriculture. Hence, the study recommends that due diligence be done by conducting farm assessments to ensure that natural resources such as adequate water and soil suitability are available for significant production. Implementation will be as follows:

| Activity | Target Date | Resources | Responsible Persons | Anticipated Results |
|---|-------------|----------------------|--|--|
| Assess all available resources at the farm | Month | Staff Time Travel | DRDLR, DARD and Municipality officials | Report on the status of boreholes, soil types, infrastructure, mechanization etc |
| Action to be taken to enhance resources (Borehole drilling, soil testing) | 2 months | Funding Time | Outsourced service providers | Adequate resources to allow the farm to work to full capacity. |

5.4.2 Cooperatives and value chains

The study found that more than half of the participants have sole ownership of the farms, in contradiction to literature that suggests that women cooperatives are the best solution to having access to finance and markets. Hence the study recommends that women smallholder farmers establish value chains and create market centres in the

areas where they live. Furthermore, they are obliged to consider market prices to shun away from selling their produce cheap.

| Activity | Target Date | Resources | Responsible Persons | Anticipated Results |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Create market centres | Year | Time Infrastructure Funds | Women smallholder farmers and Extension Services in Lejweleputswa | Well organized market centre with consistent availability of agricultural produce. |

5.4.3 Access to the markets

Access to markets has proved to be a challenge in the farming sector. The study revealed that only four participants have access to formal markets, while the rest participate in informal markets. The study recommends that women smallholder farmers negotiate with big retailers to collect produce from their farms on a regular basis. Moreover, both the formal markers and women smallholders should enter into memorandum of understanding in terms of the specifications of agricultural produce. Implementation will be as follows:

| Activity | Target Date | Resources | Responsible Persons | Anticipated Results |
|---|--|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Collection of agricultural produce by big retailers | After every two weeks depending on the enterprise. | Time Good Road Infrastructure | Women smallholder farmers and Retailers | Consistent supply of produce and an increase in the demand. |

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Draft of the MOU | Will be stipulated in the MOU | Will be stipulated in the MOU | Will be stipulated in the MOU | Training and skills development as Social Responsibility for the big retailers. |
|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|

5.4.4 Agricultural organisations

Women smallholder farmers would benefit if they belong to the right agricultural organization. Participants in the study either cancelled their membership or have never bothered to register with any agricultural organization. The study proposes that such organizations create awareness workshops to expose farmers to the benefits of membership.

5.4.5 Contract farming

Contract farming, also known as strategic partnership has been identified for the purpose of assisting farmers to take part in value chains. The study recommends that DARD initiate partnerships with private entities on behalf of women smallholder farmers to ensure their participation in value chains. Implementation will unfold as follows:

| Activity | Target Date | Resources | Responsible Persons | Anticipated Results |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------------------|---|
| Initiation of partnerships | Contractual basis | Time | DARD officials(economists) | Women smallholder farmers benefiting from partnerships in terms of skills transfer and revenue. |

5.4.6 Farm diversification

Having diverse farm activities ensures continuous income during resting period of an enterprise. The income can be utilized to keep the farm operational, e.g., pay workers, increase production inputs, farm infrastructure repairs, etc. Therefore, the study

recommends that Extension Advisors together with women smallholder examine all features of the new enterprise to allow the farmer to make informed decision on which will be suitable for the farm.

5.4.7 Extension services

The link between Agricultural extension and women smallholder farmers should be strengthened to allow farmers to make informed decisions with regards to their enterprises. Hence the study suggests that DARD avail resources to advisor, such as transport to enable advisors to access their farmers. Furthermore, Advisors be capacitated with technical and communications skills, learn more about new agricultural innovations, to deliver a service of excellence. Recommendations can be implemented in the following manner:

| Activity | Target Date | Resources | Responsible Persons | Anticipated Results |
|--|-------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Skills development for Agricultural Advisors | Yearly | Time Funding Staff | DARD Management | Learned skills that can be shared with women smallholder to enhance their business acumen. |

5.4.8 Skills development

Capacitating women smallholder with knowledge and skills is a driving force for economic growth and productivity. Hence the study recommends that farmers be exposed to different skills development opportunities in agricultural sectors; these include formal training by accredited agricultural organizations, innovation and technology, as well as research material on various topics. Implementation plan is as follows:

| Activity | Target Date | Resources | Responsible Persons | Anticipated Results |
|--|-------------|---------------------|---|---|
| Skills development for women smallholder farmers | Monthly | Time Funding | Stakeholders (private: retailers, Agricultural Organizations such as AgriSA, SAPPO and public: Government departments and municipalities) | Farmer to be equipped with financial management, good farm practice, communication and, entrepreneurial skills. |

5.4.9 Government subsidies/ grants

It is public knowledge that South African government spend millions annually in an attempt to assist black farmers to participate in commercial farming. That said, the study also found that more than half of the participants have received some form of grant. Hence, the study recommends that government departments develop criteria for selection of beneficiaries, so as to avoid any form of discrimination. The plan can be implemented as follows:

| Activity | Target Date | Resources | Responsible Persons | Anticipated Results |
|---|-------------|---------------------|--|---|
| Development of criteria for selection of beneficiaries. | Yearly | Time Funding | Staff (DARD, DRDLR and Municipalities) | Workshops to capacitate women smallholders on selection criteria. |

5.5 Recommendations for Future Study

The study focused on success factors in women smallholder farming transforming to commercial farming in the Lejweleputswa District Municipality. It is thus suggested that future researchers expand this research to other districts within the Free State province. Researchers can also explore the topic on agricultural organisations and their members, in particular women smallholder farmers, as well as on the women smallholder value chains.

5.6 Conclusion

Transformation of women smallholder to commercial farming is vital for reducing food insecurity and poverty. However, women smallholder farmers face challenges as alluded by both the field study and the literature.

Chapter 4, field study offered different themes from the interviews carried out with women smallholder farmers. Such included lack of resources, financial independence, cooperatives & value chains contributing to the economy of the country, access to markets, lack of support from agricultural organizations, contract farming, farm diversification, extension services, skills development and government subsidies/grants.

The current chapter provides recommendations on themes that emerged in the previous chapter. To minimize the negative impact with regards to lack of resources, Government departments ought to do due diligence by conducting farm assessments. These assessments can indicate if the farm is ready to be allocated to the beneficiary or if it still requires attention in terms of natural resources.

Furthermore, to participate in value chains, the study suggests that women smallholders create their own market centres where they live, for customers to have easily accessible. Moreover, access to formal markets can be achieved if women smallholders negotiate with big retailers to collect their produce from the farms on a regular basis.

Agricultural organizations ought to create awareness workshops to expose farmers to the benefits that come with being a member. The study also recommends that DARD initiate partnerships on behalf of women smallholders with private entities to ensure their participation in value chains. Also, prior to farm diversification, agricultural advisor needs to conduct extensive research on the new enterprise to allow the farmer to make informed decision.

In order for women smallholder farmers to transform into commercial farming, they require guidance from Extension services. Hence, the need for Agricultural advisors

to acquire skills to deliver excellent service. In addition, women smallholders also require skills development to enhance their agricultural practices.

Finally, development of criteria for selection of beneficiaries for provision of grants is necessary.

The chapter gave conclusions on all previous chapters and provided recommendations to both stakeholders and policy makers on how to accelerate the transformation process. Once recommendations are implemented, it is expected that production will increase, formal markets will be accessible and contribution to economic growth will increase.

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APPENDIX A: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Interview schedule (translated to Sesotho)

1. Why do you think transformation from smallholder to commercial farming is important for women in Lejweleputswa in the Free State is important?

Hobaneng o nahana hole bohlokwa hore bo rapolasi ba bomme ba kene temong ya khwebo?

2. What are the benefits for transforming women smallholder to commercial farming in Lejweleputswa in the Free State?

Ke efe melemo e tliswang ke hoba le basadi bakeng sa kemo ya kgwebo?

3. What would you need to do to increase your production by 35% in the next season?

O ka hloka ho etsa eng ho eketsa thlahiso ea hao ka 35% sehlang se tlang?

4. What would indicate to you that the objective for transforming women smallholder to commercial farming in Lejweleputswa in the Free State is achieved.

Ke eng e kao bontshang hore sepheo sa ho fetola basadi ba dihwai tse nyane hore e be temo ya khwebo se fihletswe?

5. What are the stumbling blocks that delay the pace of transforming women smallholder to commercial farming in Lejweleputswa in the Free State?

Ke ditshitiso dife tse diehisang lebelo la fetolo ya basadi ba dihwai tse nyenyanehoya ho temo e kgolo?

6. What must be done to remove stumbling blocks that prevent women smallholder to commercial farming in Lejweleputswa in the Free State?

Ho tlameha ho etswe eng hotlosa ditshitiso tse thibelang matlafatso ya dihwai tse nyenyane tsa basadi?

7. What kind of expertise do you think can enhance women smallholder for commercial farming in Lejweleputswa in the Free State?

Ke tsebo ya mofuta ofe eo o nahanang e ka matlafatsa dihoai tsa basadi tse nyane bakeng sa temo ea kgwebo?

8. Which resources are required to fast-track transformation from smallholder to commercial farming in Lejweleputswa in the Free State?

Ke disebediswa dife tse hlokahalang ho matlafatsa basadi ba dihoai tse nyane bakeng sa temo e kgolo?

9. What kind of partnership do you think could enhance transformation from smallholder to commercial farming?

Ke tshebedisano ya mofuta ofe eo o nahanang hore e ka matlafatsa matlafatso ya basadi ba dihoai tse nyane hoya temong ya kgwebo?

10. What mechanisms can be employed to identify an appropriate market for your produce that would enhance transformation from smallholder to commercial farming in Lejweleputswa in the Free State?

Ke mekgwa efe e ka sebediswang ho hloaea mmara o nepahetse bakeng sa dihlahiswa tsa hao tse ka matlafatsang matlafatso ya dihoai tse nyane e ho temo ya kgwebo?

APPENDIX B: Approval from AFASA (African Farmers' Association of South Africa)

AFASA Free State
P.O.Box 121
Boshof
8340
bmabote@gmail.com
083 243 4281



20 July 2022

The Ethics Committee
University of the Free State
205 Nelson Mandela Drive
Parkwest
Bloemfontein
9300

RE: APPROVAL TO UTILIZE INFORMATION OF FARMERS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FOR
LERATO NKABINDE (2018212023)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I confirm that Lerato Nkabinde, has requested permission to utilize our database containing information of our women farmers in regards to conducting research for her MBA degree relating to commercial farming for women smallholder farmers in the region of Lejweleputswa District.

Our association understands that part of the research involves interviews with women smallholder farmers in Lejweleputswa who will be chosen to form part of the study. We have been assured that our members will give consent to take part in the study and that information gathered will be kept safe. Hence, we hereby grant permission for Lerato to utilize information of our members for the study.

If there are any questions, please contact me.

Kind Regards,

B. Mabote

LET'S EDIT

EDITING CERTIFICATE

16 November 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

DECLARATION: Editing of Thesis

This serves to confirm that copy-editing and proofreading services were rendered to **Lerato Patience Nkabinde** for a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) field study entitled **CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR WOMEN SMALLHOLDER-FARMERS TRANSFORMING INTO COMMERCIAL FARMERS, LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT: FREE STATE**. The content of the work edited remains that of the student. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure of the correctness of the document.

Edited by:



Catherine Laing

Master of Science (in Management of Technology and Innovation) (cum laude), Practical Copy-Editing and Proofreading Certificate (SA Writer's College) and Copy-Editing Certificate (University of Cape Town)

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