Developing an entrepreneurial framework for increasing beef production through small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Zimbabwe

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DECLARATION

I, Edwill Mtengwa, with the undersigned signature and student number 34489940 hereby declare that this thesis titled “Developing a Framework for increasing beef production through Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Zimbabwe” is my original work and no one else. That I have cited sources and referenced all materials used in one way or another for this work. Furthermore, ideas, analyses, findings, and conclusions that are drawn in this study are entirely developed by and large for this study and all material sources or quotes used in the study from start to completion have been duly acknowledged.

Edwill Mtengwa (34489940) 10/05/2023

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Signed **Date**

DEDICATION

This PhD thesis is dedicated, firstly, to God, the Almighty for giving me the strength, knowledge, and wisdom to complete this study. In his word in Philippians 4:7, he says “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”. Secondly, I dedicate this work to my late father Johnson Mtengwa Ndlovu, and my mother Etina Sibanda who tirelessly encouraged me to study.

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SMEs ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe embarked on a Land Reform Program (FTLRP) to fast-track and correct the historical land ownership imbalances. Two models were enacted, the A1 and A2 model to redress the land disparity. The A1 was designed for resettlement of indigenous people in rural areas. The A2 model intened for commercial farming to replicate previously white owned large-scale commercial farms. The introduction of the land reform and indigenisation policies by the government of Zimbabwe was aimed at revamping the economy through black empowerment and social cohesion. In the agricultural sector, the strategy aimed at promoting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with a focus on agro-processing and agribusinesses in general. This study focused on beef cattle SMEs as a key driver to the agrarian economy. SMEs were the life blood of commercial agriculture in the pre-indigenisation policies, as such, the government introduced a policy to influence beef cattle production across the entire value chain. Despite the noble intention of the policy in Zimbabwe, the beef cattle SMEs have failed to achieve the expected levels of production and value addition in line with pre-land reform levels and standards. TO The contrary, the inception of the land reform and indigenous policies have led to the collapse of the beef cattle SMEs across the Zimbabwe and the situation has deteriorated compared to pre-policy levels and standards.

In this study, the researchers used primary and secondary data to explore the challenges and strategies implemented by beef SMEs since the introduction of the A1 and A2 models. A sequential mixed method research design was followed. The collected data was analysed using an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) method and Thematic Analysis method. Findings from the study revealed that Zimbabwe's policy environment does not support the growth and development of beef cattle SMEs toward the achievement of high-level performances as was envisaged in the onset of the policy reform. Results also show that the government do not have a clear strategy to support beef SMEs to perform better when compared to the pre-colonial level. Furthermore, the study found that the programmes for capacity building; monitoring and evaluation; research and development as well as financial subsidies to beef SMEs are non-existent despite capacity building programmes being the blueprint for the policy reform introduced by the government. This led to the researchers in this study to develop a strategic entrepreneurial framework for beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe to enhance beef cattle SMEs production and performance.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFRODAD	African Forum and Network on Debt and Development
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
COMMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CRDB	Cooperative and Rural Development Bank
DIT	Department of Industry and Trade (South Africa)
DMRT	Duncan's Multiple Range Test
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
ERP	Economic Recovery Program
ESAP	Economic and Social Adjustment Program
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Program
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFM	International Monetary Fund
MFEA	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
NEDF	National Entrepreneurship Development Fund
NISS	National Informal Sector Survey
NSIC	National Small Industries Corporation
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
RISS	Rural Informal Sector Survey
ROA	Return on Asset
ROI	Return on Investment
RTC	Regional Trading Corporation
SADC	Southern African Development Corporation
SELF	Small Enterprise Loan Facility
SER	Strategic Entrepreneurial Response
SIDO	Small Industries Development Organisation
SOE	State Owned Enterprises
UN	United Nations
UNIDO	United Nations Development Organisation
USA	United States of America
UK	United Kingdom
WB	World Bank

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

The focus of this study was to develop a framework for increasing beef cattle production through Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Zimbabwe. Njanike (2019:1) opined that the concept of SMEs varies from country to country based on government policies and regulations. According to the Government Gazette, (2020:6), SMEs are a separate and independent business unit with a staff compliment of less than 50 people that are often owner managed. In the Zimbabwean context, beef SME is a subsector of the agricultural industry and a strategic subsector in the agricultural sector that need strategic entrepreneurship skills development.

Over the past 20 years, Zimbabwe has witnessed turbulence in the macroeconomic environment. The strategic entrepreneurship (SE) policy was meant to ensure organisational sustainability and survival of SMEs. Schroder *et al.,* (2021:1) argue that strategic entrepreneurship is an emerging field of study that integrates opportunity seeking and advantage seeking behaviours for the enhancement of entrepreneurial skills leading to superior firm performance and wealth creation. Organisations can perfom by pursuing opportunities and taking advantage of strategic entrepreneurial drive (Schroder *et al.,* 2021:1). However, literature on strategic entrepreneurship across the world have revealed diverse, scattered, and fragmented research works. Ireland *et al.,* (2003a:966) allude that strategic entrepreneurship is entrepreneurial actions with a strategic perspective that evolve around integration of entrepreneurship and strategic management.

Strategic entrepreneurship is regarded as the driver for organisational growth and economic transformation of industry especially in developing countries that allows for effective and efficient allocation of scarce economic resources (Schroder *et al.,* 2021:9). Like other sectors of the Zimbabwean economy, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) specialising in cattle beef need to benefit from the integration of the concept of entrepreneurship and strategic management explained Kiyabo and Isaga (2019:44). Strategic management fosters an innovative way of thinking for new sources of competitive advantage by taking advantage of external opportunities. It uses internal strengths of an organisation while at the same time minimising the adverse effects of external threats and internal weaknesses. Complimentary to strategic management concept is entrepreneurship, which is a dynamic process of incremental wealth creation through risk taking in pioneering new projects, products, and services (Shrouf, 2019:95).

The combination of strategic entrepreneurial oriented thinking with strategic management philosophies must be embedded in beef cattle SMEs as a tool to ensure sustainability of operations in Zimbabwe. The innovative approach may lead to sustainable economic growth, job creation and competitiveness (Shrouf, 2019:95). Currently, the framework guiding beef SMEs in Zimbabwe in terms of business strategies, legislation, funding, and the role of government in the operation of beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe is a concern. This concern is the basis for the development of a new efficient and effective beef cattle SME strategic entrepreneurial framework to enhance beef cattle production in the country. The framework once developed may enhance beef cattle SMEs contribution to the Gross Domestic Production (GDP) of Zimbabwe and foster the national food security drive. The framework once developed may add to existing knowledge on the concept of strategic entrepreneurship within the agricultural industry and beef cattle sector.

In Zimbabwe, most studies have focussed on beef cattle herds improvement in terms of the health management of cattle; quality of the livestock; sustainable forage production strategies, livestock disease controls and the marketing of beef (Ndengu *et al.*, 2017:3; Mukarati *et al.*, 2020:2). While policies and strategies to improve livestock production in Zimbabwe have been researched, none of these studies looked at the combination of the concept of entrepreneurship and strategic management to develop a framework for improving beef cattle SMEs in the country (USAID, 2021:13). Although scholars such as Mhlanga (2000: 12) and Mashoko *et al.* (2007:6) conducted studies on policies and strategies to improve livestock production in Zimbabwe. Anseeuw *et al,* (2012 :4) note that, these studies and their outcomes never yielded a framework that supports the growth and competitiveness of SMEs involved in the beef sector hence the need to carry out a study with a focus on developing a framework for increasing beef cattle production through Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Zimbabwe

1.1 Background to the Study

The key construct of the present study was the integration of strategic entrepreneurial with strategic management to develop a framework that will act as a tool for enhancing beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe. The study commences with an extensive review of literature on the existing framework guiding beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe. The current framework in use for beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe is the A1 and A2 models that have seen beef cattle production levels declining since the framework came into effect 20 years ago.

In the Zimbabwe context, A1 and A2 are resettlement models born out of the Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) of 2002. Through the Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP), the land resource was

redistributed to the indigenous people mainly from African descent who constitute most the country's population from former landowners of European descent. The A1 model of Zimbabwe was meant for subsistence farming while the A2 model focused on commercial agriculture modelled around replicating the large-scale commercial farming enterprises that was being practiced by farmers of European origin. The A2 model herein referred to Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) whose main objective was to create a group of 51,000 upcoming commercial farmers (Sibanda *et al.,* 2014:13). Sibanda *et al.,* (2014:13) further noted that the A2 Model or SMEs model focus was on the commercial production of agricultural products with an average farm size of 100 to 1500 ha (ibid 2014:13) being reallocated to indigenous farmers.

Tavirimirwa (2013:5) posits that for an applicant to have a farm through the A2 model, the applicant must have a considerable level of credibility to be able to access operating capital and some level of technical and entrepreneurial knowhow to ensure farm viability. However, twenty years into the implementation of the A2 model, beef cattle production has been declining. The current study therefore focuses on SMEs under the A2 framework in Zimbabwe as a base for the development of an alternative framework for increasing beef cattle production given the failure of the A2 model twenty years into its implementation.

Before the introduction of the A2 Model, fresh beef and cattle by-products used to contribute an average of US$50 million to Zimbabwe's forex earnings (Scoones *et al*., 2010:16). Nkomboni and Beekman (2015:11) highlighted that, due to the alleged death of entrepreneurism in Zimbabwe, the sector has witnessed a sharp decline in beef cattle production and the country has become a net importer of beef. Mutenga (2020:4) in a study of Zimbabwe's agricultural sector revealed that, the country heavily relies on imports in all sectors of the agricultural industry thereby worsening the country's balance of payments. In 2019, the beef sector in Zimbabwe imported 1185 tons of beef and in 2020 the sector imported 1783 tons of beef from Botswana and Namibia (Livestock Market Update, 2021:8). Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (2017) revealed that Zimbabwe had a trade deficit of $3.9 billion for 2016 and the current account deficit was more than $25 billion in 2021 and the situation shows no signs for improvement.

Arguments are that the implementation of landform programme (A1 and A2 models) in 2002 in Zimbabwe led to several changes in strategies and policies towards building the national cattle herd. Furthermore, research in the livestock production sector of Zimbabwe have mainly focussed on improving the quality of herds (USAID:2019:5); forage production strategies (Chakoma, 2020:3); livestock diseases and their effect on the marketing of beef (Kanhukamwe, 2020:5) with little work done on the management of organisations that are involved in the beef cattle production sector. Further, extensive literature review search found no

study focusing on the integration of strategic entrepreneurship with strategic management principles by organisations involved in the beef cattle sector. Despite the availability of land given to the A2 beef cattle ranchers at no cost, the existence of appropriate entrepreneurial strategies and management strategies by Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs) involved in the beef cattle sector have remained a concern.

Studies on strategic entrepreneurship have mostly been done on firms in advanced economies of Europe, North America and Australia but not in the developing countries (Shirokova *et al*., 2012:4). These studies on strategic entrepreneurship were conceptual, developed, applied, and tested in firms across the developed countries (Ireland, 2003:35: Kuratko and Audretsch, 2009:66; Harms *et al* 2012:23; Shirokova, Vega and Solokova, 2012:4) but not in the developing countries. Furthermore, McElwee (2008:26) opined that, "a farm should be managed using business management principles. This is a scenario currently obtaining in developed countries rather than considering farming as a source for subsistence as observed in most developing countries".

Lang and Fick (2019:155) purport that the domain of entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector remains under researched. Bengesi, (2013:18) in a study on strategic entrepreneurial response of SMEs at the University of Pretoria explored the suitability of Strategic Entrepreneurship (SE) in a challenging and competitive environment of which Zimbabwe is such an environment. The study focused on SMEs in general and how they apply strategic entrepreneurship (SE) in fighting competitive environmental challenges. Mujuru, (2014:23) in her study on crop farming-with a focus on two irrigation schemes did not look at the role of SE in beef cattle production and hence leaving a gap in beef cattle SMEs that need to be filled.

In South Africa, small-scale beef cattle SMEs are also witnessing strategic entrepreneurship and strategic management challenges notwithstanding considerable research and development programs targeted at this sector (Mthi *et al.*, 2018:2). Although a study in South Africa has identified factors that are impacting on the participation of small-scale farmers in the formal and informal markets (Montshwe, 2006:9), the focus was to identify factors that increase small scale farmers involvement in the formal markets. This study did not combine the concepts of strategic entrepreneurship and strategic management to develop a framework for SMEs involved in the agricultural sector of South Africa.

Phillips (2013:6) and Visser *et al.* (2020:12–18) explained that the low productivity in the small-scale beef farming sector in South Africa is attributed to management inefficiencies that need to be improve if the sector intends to remain viable. These findings contradict the observation as the industry appears to be thriving in

other countries in Africa (ibidi, 2013:6). Phillips (2013:6) argued that the beef cattle industry in Southern African Development Countries (SADC) must close this gap and take advantage of Africa's projected population growth from one billion to two billion by 2050. The increase in population translated to a phase of increasing red meat demand (World Bank Report 2017:14). In a country like Zimbabwe, the development of the beef cattle sector is largely dependent on a shift from existing policies and framework to a more strategic entrepreneurial and management frame. The World Bank (2017:14) suggests that approximately 75% of the Africa's population depend on agriculture for their livelihood and hence primary agriculture is critical to the sustainability of country's economy. Frischen *et al.*, (2020:12) further affirms that, primary agriculture contributes between 16-20% of the GDP, 40% to 60% of export earnings and raw materials to agro industries and agro-processing SMEs.

According to a (FAO, 2019:44), a third of formal labour force in Zimbabwe is linked to the agriculture-related industries while the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCRCS, 2019:4) noted that Zimbabwe is primarily an agro-based economy. Mujeyi (2019:46) affirms that beef production in Zimbabwe used to be the main sector for international trade before year 2000. However, the current performance of the agricultural sector is at 20% levels of standard set before the implementation of the Fast-Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) from the year 2000 to 2002 (Nkomboti and Beekman, 2015:14)

Nkomboti and Beekman (2015:14) further explained that, from 2001 to date, the performance of the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe has fallen significantly. This has resulted in the increased reliance on imports with worsening balance of trade of over US$22 billion in deficit (The World Fact Book, 2019:13). The decline in the agricultural sector has not spared the beef cattle production sector which was the main contributor to the national and export markets of the agricultural sector of Zimbabwe. The agricultural sector in Zimbabwe at it peaks before 2000 had exports of beef of 14 million tonnes, contributing approximately US$50 million to the country's foreign currency earnings (Zimbabwe Agricultural Policy Framework, 2019:7). However, statistics reveal a massive decline in beef cattle production in the A2 sector after the FTLRP of 2000 (Anseeuw *et al.*, 2012:3). Beef cattle production in Zimbabwe has dropped by a massive 85% from pre-FTLRP policy implementation rendering the country a net importer of beef (Nkomboni and Beekman, 2015:14). As a result, the role of strategic entrepreneurship and strategic management principles application to beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe have not been implemented before, this has necessitated the development of a framework that respond to the changing beef cattle environment for increase small-holder beef productivity.

Bond (2008:18) and Raftopoulos and Harmmar (2003:2) have criticised the land reform program in Zimbabwe as anti-business and argues that it was more of a political strategy by the government to maintain its grip on power. Moyo (2014:13) alludes that the mismanagement of the land reform program contributed significantly to the economic meltdown of the country resulting in the government's failure to provide an enabling environment for beef cattle SMEs to thrive. Mudzengerere (2008:1) and Mushunje (2005:7) added that, most of the resettled farmers engaged in beef cattle farming as a part-time venture rather than a business venture. Land and cattle to these farmers had sentimental value rather than a business value and this affected the indigenous farmers' capability to become commercial beef cattle entrepreneurs. This was supported by Burton and Wilson (2006:95) and Bjornskov (2013:75) who opined that, the perception that upcoming beef cattle entrepreneurs have more of the cattle complex inclination than business orientation. The cattle farmers regard cattle as storage for their money as compared to an investment vehicle (Mushunje, 2005). These authors explained that cattle complex mentality that cattle are merely storage for value and only sold to meet immediate cash needs (Herskovits 1926: 230). This study intends to develop a strategic entrepreneurial Management framework for the enhancement of beef cattle production in Zimbabwe.

1.2 Problem Statement

Nkomboni and Beekman (2015:14) observed that before the year 2000, abattoirs in Zimbabwe used to handle approximately 2415 000 cattle a year. But as of 2020, total abattoir slaughters dropped to about 400 000 animals which is about 15% of pre-land reform figures. Furthermore, Pre-land reform era in Zimbabwe (1980's and 1990's) saw the Cold Storage Company (CSC), a national parastatal for beef cattle slaughter and marketing handling more than 1.2 million carcases a year which was equivalent to 150 000 thousand tonnes of beef per year. This same quantity was being handled by other small players including communal farmers across the country. In sharp contrast to pre-land reform era, Mukoshori (2014:7) in a study pointed out that, "post-land reform programme in Zimbabwe saw the Cold Storage Company (CSC) handling less than 10 000 tonnes of beef annually and the quantities being processed are declining year on year to date. Although the Cold Storage Company (CSC) livestock finance program of Zimbabwe financed more than 600 000 herd of cattle on commercial farms pre-land reform era, the company (CSC) currently finances 600 herds of cattle in 9 commercial farms (Zimbabwe Government Gazette, 2017:23). The rebuilding of Zimbabwe's commercial herd is one challenge the government has not resolved and the A2 framework that was developed to optimise beef cattle production in Zimbabwe has failed 20 years after the start of its implementation. This declining beef cattle productivity maybe attributed to policy confusion and a lack of a

strategic entrepreneurial management framework given the failure of the A2 model for sustained beef cattle production after the land reform program of 2000.

Despite the declining production quantities and standards, permanent solution to the problem is not on sight as the current framework (A1 and A2 Model) has been able to deliver a total of 5.5 million cattle down from 6.8 million in 2000 (Zimbabwean Agricultural Policy Framework, 2019:42). Furthermore, the communal farmers (A1 model) own approximately 92% of the 5.5 million cattle with large scale commercial and A2 farmers (SMEs) together owning a mere 440 000 (8%) of the total cattle population in the country. The A2 model of beef cattle production was designed to drive the country's commercial beef production agenda, replicating what departed large scale commercial farmers of European descent used to do pre-land reform program in 2000. But this group of farmers presently contributes only 8% (440 000 animals) of the total of cattle population in Zimbabwe. This number is far below the expectations set in the commercial A2 model objective for Zimbabwe's beef cattle production sector and the challenges maybe attributed to the post-land reform programme implementation strategies and management. Hence, the present study sought to develop an alternative framework for increasing beef cattle production by SMEs in Zimbabwe drawing from the failures of the current A2 model framework that was implemented post land reform programme of 2002. The following section will give an outline of the aim of this study.

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to develop a strategic entrepreneurial management framework for increasing beef cattle production by SMEs through commercial beef cattle farmers in Zimbabwe. To achieve this aim, the objectives of this study are outlined below.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Based on the aim of this study which was to develop a strategic entrepreneurial management framework for increasing beef cattle production by SMEs involved in the beef cattle sector of Zimbabwe, the objectives of the study were:

1.4.1 To explore the extent to which an entrepreneurial culture and orientation exists in A2 beef SME sector.

1.4.2 To explore the impact of current government policies and framework on SMEs involved in beef cattle production in Zimbabwe.

1.4.3 To explore government's technical support mechanisms to SMEs in the beef cattle sector of Zimbabwe.

1.4.4 To establish alternative individual and sector strategies for SMEs in the beef cattle production sector of Zimbabwe.

1.5 The underlying assumption for this study was that:

1.5.1 The majority of the A2 beef cattle farmers in Zimbabwe do not operate beef cattle SMEs as a business as envisaged by the A2 Model.

1.5.2 These A2 beef cattle SMEs have no clear business strategies after the land reform program of 2000 in Zimbabwe

1.5.3 The A2 beef farmers have little understanding of the government land reform program and the envisaged outcome.

1.5.4 The government support to A2 beef SMEs were grossly inadequate for the sustainability of beef cattle production post land reform programme in terms of the following:

1.5.4.1 Infrastructure development (road network to access to the means, transport and communication, supply chain management)

1.5.4.2 Research and development

1.5.4.3 Financing

1.5.4.4 Information sharing

1.6 Hypothesis of the study

Based on the problem statement, aim and objectives, hypothesis were developed to establish the relationship between constructs with measurable variables to enable the researcher to develop a framework for increasing beef cattle production by SMEs in Zimbabwe. The constructs identified were entrepreneurial culture, enablers for beef cattle SMEs and business strategies.

1.6.1 H_0: Entrepreneurial orientation and culture do not exist amongst SMEs involved with beef cattle production.in Zimbabwe.

1.6.2 H_1: Entrepreneurial orientation and culture do exist amongst SMEs involved with beef cattle production.in Zimbabwe.

1.6.3 H_0: key enablers for SMEs involved in beef cattle production of Zimbabwe are not incorporated in the current A2 model for beef cattle SMEs.

1.6.4 H_1: key enablers for SMEs involved in beef cattle production of Zimbabwe are incorporated in the current A2 model for beef cattle SMEs.

1.6.5 H_0: SMEs involved in beef cattle production sector of Zimbabwe do not have sector business strategies for increase beef cattle production.

1.6.6 H_1: SMEs involved in beef cattle production sector of Zimbabwe do have sector business strategies for increase beef cattle production.

1.7 Research Questions

In this study, the broad research question seeks to answer the "How can strategic entrepreneurship principles be combined with strategic management principle to develop a framework for increasing beef cattle production in Zimbabwe by SMEs". This broad research question is supported by the following questions:

1.7.1 To what extent does entrepreneurial orientation and culture exist in A2 beef SME sector of Zimbabwe post the land reform program?

1.7.2 To what extent is the current government policy framework (A2 Model) have influenced the performance beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe?

1.7.3 To what extent have the technical support provided by the government of Zimbabwe towards the A2 Model contributed to the challenges of increase beef cattle production by SMEs in Zimbabwe?

1.7.4 To what extend an alternative framework to the A2 Model may influence the beef cattle SMEs towards increasing beef cattle production?

1.8 Motivation and contribution of this study

This research aims to contribute towards the understanding of SMEs contribution towards the development of the beef cattle to the economy to reduce poverty and unemployment in Zimbabwe. In this study factors that contribute to the growth and sustainability of beef cattle SMEs were explored to develop a strategic entrepreneurial management framework as an alternative to the current A2 Model. Strategic entrepreneurship (SE) according to Schröder *et al.* (2021:1) depicts the nexus of strategic management and entrepreneurship, suggesting that firms can create superior wealth when they simultaneously pursue advantage-seeking and opportunity-seeking behaviour.

This has led to the rapid growth in SE research adopting a multidisciplinary approach although the literature on SE is fragmented. Furthermore, Schindehutte and Morris (2009:241) explained that strategic entrepreneurship is an emerging field of study that integrates opportunity seeking and advantage seeking behaviours leading to superior firm performance and wealth creation. According to Van Wagenberg *et al*. (2017: 1839-1851) existing research studies on livestock production in Zimbabwe mostly focused on the hard science of improving livestock quality, forage production strategies, livestock disease treatment and control;

and their effect on the marketing of beef . In Zimbabwe, limited studies have been done to explore the nexus between strategic management and entrepreneurship in beef cattle sector. As such, entrepreneurial culture amongst A2 beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe remains questionable and maybe one of the failures in the implementation of the A2 model.

Shirokova *et al.* (2012:13) opined that the research studies on strategic entrepreneurship focused on firms in advanced economies of Europe, North America and Australia and frameworks developed have been tested in developed countries. As such the A2 model developed by Zimbabwean government in 2002 after the land reform program of 2000 has exposed weakness in A2 farmers' entrepreneurial capability. Notwithstanding Zimbabwe's land reform program that led to policy reforms and the A2 model in the agricultural sector, poverty and food insecurity continue to be prevalent (UNDP Report, 2020:1). Although Silva, (2012:12) attributed these challenges to climate change and population growth, the Zimbabwean land reform program and indigenisation policies of 2000 weakened the agricultural system. Tittonell (2014) and FAO (1999) added that agricultural production challenges have dominated debates in the global development agendas, but the application of strategic entrepreneurial concepts as a direction towards agricultural SMEs sustainability have not featured in the discourse.

Currently, Zimbabwe is a net importer of beef but before the year 2000, as indicated before, Zimbabwe used earn positive returns from the beef sector in terms of forex earnings through enhanced beef production. The nation can utilise the A2 beef cattle producers of the country to earn the much needed as foreign currency riding on the availability of the suitable land that was made available to A2 beef cattle farmers during the FTLRP. It is sad to note that despite the frequent policy amendments and strategy to adjust the A2 model to respond to the agricultural production challenges faced by Zimbabwean commercial farmers, these farmers are failing to rebuild the national herds. This is evidenced by the numbers of beef cattle and beef cattle SMEs that keep declining, partly attributed to the non-functionality of the A2 model. The next section will explain the contributions of the study.

1.9 Managerial Contribution.

Breese, Couch and Turner (2020:17) opined that a well-designed and properly implemented framework may have a positive impact on an organisation growth and success. This study explored the business strategies used by A2 beef cattle SMEs and such an exploration would lead to the development of a strategic entrepreneurial framework for an increase in beef production in Zimbabwe. Findings from this study maybe be relevant to SMEs in the beef cattle production sector of Zimbabwe. The study may helped identify

management bottlenecks in beef cattle SMEs and ensure better resource allocation within the sector, a weakness in the current A2 Model.

1.10 Theoretical Contribution.

Findings from this study contribute to the debates on land reforms and livelihoods in Zimbabwe and whether strategic entrepreneurship approach is the tool for correcting failures in the existing A2 model. Though there exist studies on land reform in Zimbabwe that focused on the perceived impact of land reform policies on agricultural productivity in general, these studies were focused on the socio-economic impact of the policy on beneficiaries, but not on the strategic growth and sustainability of agricultural SMEs. Hammar *et al.,* (2003:263); Rutherford (2003: 321) and Richardson (2005:387) argued that most critics of the land reform program in Zimbabwe focused on the dynamics of the land occupations such as the displacement by the FTLRP and failed to address strategic entrepreneurial management dynamics of the land occupiers. This study identifies a research gap that goes beyond land occupation and displacement but tackle the fundamental question on whether post land reform program policies have delivered to the beneficiaries the opportunity and benefits it was meant to achieve.

Hitt *et al.,* (2011: 4); Harms *et al.,* (2012:1); Ireland *et al.,* (2014 22); and Kantur (2016:6) suggests that most applied research and theories on strategic entrepreneurship has been developed and tested on firms in developed countries. Zahra and Wright (2011:4) and Shirokova, Vega and Sokolova, (2013:18) further stated that, concepts of strategic entrepreneurship in the agriculture sector remain under researched and the question around the capability of farmers to become entrepreneurs need further examination (McElwee, 2008:11). Zahra and Wright, (2011:3) and (Niemi and Ahlstedt, 2008:13) explained that, although farmers are business minded from the onset of their operations, the skills needed by these farmers to manage their operations are limited especially in developing countries (Mayberry *et al.,* 2005:33 and Lourenzani *et al.,* 2005).

The design and execution of the present study may result in a strategies entrepreneurial model that may enhance the technical ability of beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe with the much-needed management knowledge to operate their businesses. Findings of the study will result in sector specific strategies for SMEs in the beef cattle subsector. These entrepreneurs are producers of primary product rather than entrepreneurs in the agribusiness supply chain (Niemi and Ahlstedt, 2008:13; Burton and Wilson, 2006:6). De Wolf, McElwee and Schoorlemmer, (2007:2) suggested that, despite challenges beef cattle SMEs have been facing with regard to the implementation of the A2 Model, there exists some level of entrepreneurial know-

how in operating their farming business. There is little alignment of the practical knowledge and experience by farmers into the mainstream construct of business management principles.

1.11 Policy Contribution.

At a policy level, lessons derived from this study may help policy makers to plan post land reform policies to incorporate findings and empower farmers with strategic entrepreneurship and management as an approach to optimise production. The land reform policy broad objective is to avail land at the disposal of the indigenous majority and decongest rural areas (Nkomboti & Beekman, 2015:15). The lessons for policy makers maybe an alternative to the A2 model in the allocation of means of production such as land for profitable use and contribution towards the GDP of the country regardless of race.

1.12 Significance and delimitation of the study

The study contributes to existing literature for future references by students and researchers when conducting studies related to strategic entrepreneurship and management in the agricultural sector of Zimbabwe and beyond. The study further contributes to the understanding of beef cattle SMEs failure and their contribution to the Zimbabwean economy**.** The strategic entrepreneurial framework developed is expected to enhance the performance of beef cattle SMEs and contribute towards an improved performance.

The strategic entrepreneurial framework once developed and implemented by the Zimbabwean beef cattle SMEs can maximum the benefits from the land. The improved performance of beef cattle SMEs through A2 farmers upon implementation of the framework may result in increased employment opportunities in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, new ventures may emerge through forward and backward linkages because of increased cattle beef production by SMEs.

This study may contribute to the existing body of knowledge gained as a result improved beef cattle SMEs productivity. Through the development of a sector specific strategic entrepreneurial framework, legislations and targeted policies may be influenced to improve beef cattle SMEs performances in Zimbabwe. The developed strategic entrepreneurial framework may also be replicated in less developed countries across Africa as a model for improving the performance of SMEs in the beef cattle sectors.

1.13 Delimitation of the study

According to Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018:113), the limitations of a study are potential weaknesses beyond a researcher's control that may impact the outcome and results of a study. Due to the nature of this study which is based on samples from the A2 beef cattle farmers relative to the entire agricultural industry,

the findings of this study may not be generalised to the entire agricultural fraternity the world over, but the beef sector in Zimbabwe and possibly Southern Africa. Also, methodological approach used can be adopted by other studies. Data used for this study to develop the strategic entrepreneurship framework was collected from A2 beef cattle SMEs and did not include A1 beef cattle farmers in Zimbabwe. The strategic entrepreneurship framework is not developed for SMEs in general but for A2 beef cattle SMEs. However, the existence of similar challenges faced by SMEs in Zimbabwe regardless of the industry may enable other sectors adapting the model across sectors and industries. Furthermore, this study did not cover the aspects of diseases and disease control in beef cattle production.The study was limited to strategic entrepreneurship and management of SMEs in the beef cattle sector and not the entire agricultural industry and the beef cattle supply chain.

1.14 Operational defination of terms

In research study, conceptualisation of key constructs is crucial as it enlightens the readers of contextual meanings of certain words and pharses as they are applied in the study. Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen & Snelgrove, (2016:5) opined that having proper contextual understanding and applicability of terms and phases in any text is a key enabler for understanding and making sense of the document. The purpose this section being to expatiate the terms and ground the readers to common understanding forthwith. The definitions covered under this section include entrepreneurship, business environmental factors, SMEs, market orientation, entrepreneurial orientation, networking capability and strategic entrepreneurial response amongst others. The details of these concepts are reviewed in detail in chapter two and three.

1.14.1 Entrepreneurship

There is consensus by scholars that entrepreneurship pertains to the identification and exploitation of opportunities (Shane, 2003:4; Shane & Vankataraman (2000:211). In this study, entrepreneurship will be contextualised as the willingness and positioning by A2 beef SMEs to grab opportunities to operate beef cattle businesses as commercial entities for with the national mandate of replicating what large scale farmers of the past used to do in mind.

1.14.2 Business environmental factors

These are internal and external environmental factors which limit or aid success as conceptualised by (Kahan, 2012:3). Nyamuziwa and Mavhiki (2014:9) conceptualised external factors to be political, government policy; economic; sociological; research and development infrastructure; and natural and risk mitigation factors. Internal factors, as alluded by Nyamuziwa and Mavhiki (2014:9), are inclusive of the

organisation's resources, capabilities, culture, structure, products, and business processes. In this study, business environmental factors speak to the government policy framework, technical support, legal aspects, the general government support and also economic factors.

1.14.3 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

As written by Ayyagari (2015:14), the SME definitions differ considerably between countries and between regions. There is no one standard definition for SMEs as different countries define it in tandem with their developmental levels and national objectives (Hidayet et al.,2010:3). As provided by the SMEs Act of Zimbabwe, the legal framework of the country defines an SME legally registered entity that employs 100 employees and below (Musarurwa. 2015:13). This provision resonates with the literature in the Zimbabwean ministry of SMEs which alludes that a small enterprise employee be fewer than 50 employees and with a medium enterprise not having more than 100 employees (Zimbabwean Ministry of SMEs, 2016:8) hence the study aligned itself in tandem with the Zimbabwean context definition. Beef cattle SMEs under consideration in the study are the legally registered within the A2 framework.

1.14.4 Entrepreneurial orientation (EO)

A company's strategic stance is referred to as its entrepreneurial orientation and relates to and reflects how business chooses to compete in seeking market dominance (Anderson *et al.*, 2015:1579-1596). The entrepreneurial orientation necessitates actions that gives the organisations the impetus to utilise available and new technologies and to cease opportunities. In the same vein, the literature has explored five characteristics, including autonomy, invention, risk-taking, proactivity, and competitive aggressiveness, to make up and distinguish essential entrepreneurial processes as a component of the firm's entrepreneurial orientation (McKenny, *et al.*, 2018: 504-521). In this study, EO has been applied as the attitude reassembled by beef cattle SMEs in response to external environmental stimuli to align themselves to grab business opportunities in that sector and to follow standard business practises in their operations.

1.14.5 Collaborative entrepreneurship (CE)

Collaborative entrepreneurship, as expatiated by literature is the origination of a new and jointly manufactured set of ideas resultant from sharing of information and knowledge emanating from external of the firm (Franco & Haase, 2013:12 and Miles *et al*., 2006:41). In this study, collaborative entrepreneurship amalgamates strategic entrepreneurship and collaborative innovation involves the creation of innovations by sharing of ideas, knowledge, and opportunities amongst A2 beef SMEs in Zimbabwe.

1.14.6 Strategic entrepreneurship

According to Schindehutte & Morris (2009:241) The integration of opportunity seeking and advantage seeking actions resulting in wealth creation is conceptualised as Strategic entrepreneurship. Strategic entrepreneurship is hence an upcoming line and field of study that leads to firm superiority in terms its performance levels (Utoyo *et al.*, 2020:20; Ketchen *et al.,* 2007:371). This study alludes that strategic entrepreneurship is entrepreneurial actions with a strategic perspective that evolve around integration of entrepreneurship and strategic management within the A2 beef SMEs space.

1.14.7 Organisational Learning Theory

Ideally, organisational learning theory explains how an organisation builds its knowledge base through time and allocates its knowledge reservoir to accomplish performance, hence producing wealth (Ketchen et al., 2007:379).

1.14.8 Resource based view (RBV)

The resource-based view is the dominant idea in strategic management circles and, more recently, in entrepreneurial studies (Whitfield, 2019:324-335; Pereira & Bamel, 2021:557-570.). According to the resource-based viewpoint, certain assets and competencies serve as the foundation for an organization's competitive advantage, hence provide the necessary conditions for material organisational performance and, ultimately, wealth generation (Ramírez *et al.*, 2020:7). The physical and mental elements that are under their control and important for the sustainability of their businesses make up the resources for beef SMEs.

1.14.9 Dynamic capabilities theory (DCT)

How firms attain differences in performance standards in dynamic and volatile environments can be explained by the dynamic capability theory. Teece (2007:13220) argues that in volatile environment characterised by changes in technological advancement, customer needs, opportunities and threats and actions of competitors' needs unique and inimitable dynamic capabilities. In the context of this study, dynamic capabilities are the unique capabilities like management skills which the beef cattle SMEs might possess and are critical mass to the management of their entities.

1.14.10 Knowledge management (KM)

Since knowledge management is a discipline that encourages an integrated approach to finding, recording, analyzing, retrieving, and sharing all of an enterprise's information assets, it enhances the sharing of different information (Nisar, Prabhakar & Strakova, 2019 :264-272). Databases, records, regulations, procedures, and previously untapped talent and experience in employees are just a few examples of such elements. According to this study, it can be concluded that SMEs in the beef cattle industry who effectively manage

organizational and individual knowledge will be better able to navigate the obstacles of the changing business climate and will see higher levels of organizational growth.

1.14.11 Business Ethics

Harpur *et al.,* (1989:6) argued that ethics resonates from an understanding of what is right or wrong and taking appropriate action to do the right thing. Good business ethical conduct in this study resonate with the A2 beef SMEs resembling good values through practising good corporate governance, corporate social responsibility and good corporate citizenship.

1.14.12 Strategic Entrepreneurship

Alvarez and Barney, (2020:300-310) posit that strategic entrepreneurship is a wealth creation endeavour pursued through synergies from opportunity seeking and advantage seeking exploits. Livestock entrepreneurship has massive implications for success of self-employment and A2 beef SMEs in the livestock industry.

1.14.13 Firm Performance (FP)

Firm performance (FP) has been alluded to by Taouab and Issor, (2019:93-106) as organisational performance principally focused on the capability and ability of an organisation to efficiently exploit the available resources to achieve accomplishments consistent with the set objectives of the company, as well as considering their relevance to its users. In terms of this study, firm performance is assessed in terms of the profitability and sustainability of the A2 beef SMEs.

1.14.14 Entrepreneurial Traits (ET)

Some studies have asserted that certain entrepreneurial traits (ET) in founders have a positive and significant relationship with the firm performance (Hmieleki and Carr, 2008). In the same manner, making an A2 beef SMEs successful might have a lot to do with traits of the founder/owner, which ideally are the unique characteristics that separate entrepreneurs from other people.

1.14.15 Marketing Orientation (MO)

Marketing orientation (MO) is the part of organisational culture which places great emphasis a firm's success being a direct result of customer orientation; competitor orientation; inter functional coordination; and responsiveness (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990:1). In terms of this study, MO is the application of beef SMEs knowledge of customer knowledge and general marketing capabilities to ensure market dominance and consequently ensuring sustainability of their operations.

1.14.16 Organisational Search (OS)

Organisation search (OS) is the firm's orientation towards knowledge management thereby enhancing its core-competencies for competitive advantages (Sidiki, 2012). In this study, organisational search has been contextualised to be the A2 beef SMEs capability to proactively address negative impacts emanating from the external environment.

1.14.17 Strategic Management

Hiriyappa, (2013:1) highlight that corporate strategy is enhanced by strategic entrepreneurship through the creation of competitive advantage which results in wealth creating (Hitt *et al.*, 2011:57). From a beef A2 SMEs perspective, strategic management aids in determining the status of the beef SME organisations against other organisations in pursuit of perpetual sustainability (Karadal *et al*., 2013:762-770.), hence the sources of organisation, strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the external environment are specified and analysed with aid to ensure their sustainability.

1.16 Chapters Outline

The outline of the study arrangement in chapters is outlined below.

Chapter 1: Overview of the study

The study is described in the first chapter, along with some background data. The study's significance is revealed, as well as details about the research problem. The study's goals, objectives, and the research issues it will address are all clearly stated. It provides a summary of the design of the study, including the problem statement, research questions, and hypotheses. The format of the study is outlined in the conclusion, with particular attention paid to the introduction, theoretical and conceptual framework, literature review, presentation of the results, analysis and discussion of the results, conclusions, and suggestions.

Chapter 2: Review of literature and theoretical framework

Chapter two reviews literature in relation to the objectives of the study. Literature in relation to other countries and other continents is reviewed extensively, recapitulating it to the Zimbabwean beef cattle SMEs. The chapter does a literature study of government policies and the methods used globally to boost the performance of SMEs. The literature was also reviewed in line with the study's goals, which are to determine if the beef A2 SMEs have the entrepreneurial orientation and culture within, whether government policies have had a positive impact on the performance of beef SMEs in Zimbabwe, to determine the extent to which

the government's framework has provided adequate technical assistance for the beef SMEs, and to determine what should be included in the policy framework to enhance beef cattle SME operator performance. The literature also pointed out what should be included in the policy framework to enhance the performance of SME operators.

Chapter 3: Literature review related to other countries and continents

Chapter three introduces the concept of strategic entrepreneurial response (SER) and the four proposed dimensions namely entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management, collaboration, and business. It reviews the relationship between the dimensions of strategic entrepreneurship and SME performance and the possible perplexing variables in the relationship and by and large introduces the research conceptual framework for this study. The conceptual components of strategic entrepreneurship are highlighted and the conceptual gaps facing strategic entrepreneurship are exposed. Under the guidance of by four theories namely networking theory, organisational learning theory, resource-based view, and dynamic capability view, this study proposes constructs namely entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management, collaboration, and business ethics as appropriate to fill in the conceptual gap in strategic entrepreneurship.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

The approach utilised for gathering and analysing the data is described in this chapter. The cross-sectional research methodology was be employed in this study since it is more suited than other pricey and time-consuming approaches, and the research embraced the interpretivism and positivist paradigm. The study also used a sequential exploratory approach, which is perfect for this investigation because it addresses the research questions and go into the "what" of the study. Deliberate sampling which is also known as purposive non-probability sampling was used. The main goal of purposive sampling was to focus on characteristics of a population. This helps in addressing both the primary and secondary questions as well as the objectives of the study (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016).

Chapter 5: Presentation of findings

The findings from the surveys and interviews are presented in this chapter. The material gleaned from the interviews is organized based on the major theme and many minor themes that will have emerged from the

data gathered. The results of the questionnaires will be documented, and the respondents' response rates will be noted. It displays the percentage of survey respondents who responded. The findings will be divided into three sections: biographical details, the impact of government policies on SME performance, performance indicators for SMEs, the degree to which SMEs adopt a business strategy, performance evaluation of the beef SME, and recommendations for the strategic framework for the SMEs raising beef cattle.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Integration of Data

This chapter presents the results of the surveys and interviews. The information acquired from the interviews is arranged according to the main theme and numerous supporting themes that will have come to light from the data gathered. The findings of the surveys will be recorded, and the response rates of the participants will be noted. The proportion of survey participants who replied is shown. The findings are broken down into three categories: biographical information, the effect of government policies on beef cattle SME performance, performance indicators for SMEs, the extent to which SMEs adopt a business strategy, performance evaluation of the beef SME, and recommendations for the strategic framework for SMEs raising beef cattle.

Chapter 7: Developed Framework, Conclusion and Recommendations.

Analysis and discussion will be done in five sections which are:

1. The effects of government policies on SME performance.
2. Factors that define performance in SMEs.
3. The extent of financial support from government.
4. Extent to which SMEs have a business approach.
5. What should be incorporated in the strategic framework for the beef cattle SMEs towards improving operator performance.

1.17 Chapter summary

This chapter has revealed the essence of the study, which is about the development of a strategic entrepreneurial framework to increase beef production in Zimbabwe through A2 beef cattle SMES. The background of the study, which emanates from the failure of the A2 resettlement model of beef cattle production is elucidated with the problem statement summarised to be the severe decline of the commercial beef cattle production by 85% since implementation of the FTLRP in 2002. The main research objective, being to develop a strategic entrepreneurial framework to increase beef production through beef cattle SMEs

together with supporting objectives were outlined. The motivation of the study, underpinned by the ever-rising unemployment and serious threat to food security was outlined. The study contribution which is split into managerial, theoretical and policy is superimposed. The delimitation of the study, which is centred on limited scope, time and resources was also explained together with the operational definitions of terms. The next chapter looks at the literature review to address the study objectives.

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON STUDY OBJECTIVES

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter focussed on the overview of this study. The current chapter presents a review of literature based on the research objectives with a focus to increase cattle beef cattle production by SMEs in Zimbabwe.

The chapter focuses on the key elements on how the government affects the performance of beef SMEs in accordance with the study's research objectives. Performance of SMEs, impact of entrepreneurial orientation on A2 beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe, impact of government policy, impact of resources provided by the government, impact of technical assistance on performance of beef SMEs, and traits of a productive SMEs resource-oriented beef cattle ranching framework.

2.1 Entrepreneurial orientation among A2 beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe.

According to Covin et al. (2006:72); Wang *et al.*, (2020:151), entrepreneurial orientation promotes growth when businesses adopt strategic techniques. This claim is consistent with the earlier finding of Ireland *et al*. (2001:50) on the strategic entrepreneurship ideology's role in wealth creation and subsequent growth. Studies have confirmed the usefulness of entrepreneurial orientation in strategic entrepreneurship, establishing the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance (Tajeddini *et al.*, 2020:102605; Ireland *et al.*, 2009:24; Montiel-Compos, 2018:13; Walter *et al.*, 2006:557). Several indicators for measuring performance, including return on assets (ROA), return on investment (ROI), profit, sales growth, and wealth creation (Wernke, 2017:3). Furthermore, ability of firms to generate sustainable performance and wealth creation resonates with sustainable entrepreneurial orientation.

2.1.1 Dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation in A2 beef cattle SMEs

Entrepreneurial orientation, as conceptualised by Ferreras-Méndez *et al.*, (2022:240) is a strategic posture showcasing how organisations implicitly and explicitly opt square on each other competitively. The five dimensions proposed by Howard and Floyd's (2021:31) model of entrepreneurial orientation are autonomy in decision-making and idea implementation, risk-taking in business ventures, innovativeness in product and service development, proactivity in pursuing opportunities, and competitive aggressiveness ahead of rivals. In support of this claim, the following section highlights the dimension's strategic functions in relation to A2 beef cattle SMEs.

2.1.1.1 Autonomy

Cohen and Meyer (2021:102) concluded that autonomy is a separate element of the entrepreneurial orientation and emphasized the benefit of the entrepreneurial orientation's multifaceted nature. For the A2 beef SMEs to be more effective and efficient at recognizing and seizing opportunities as they arise, they need to be autonomous. Autonomy is the ability within a firm to allow employees to act and make decisions and execute them without the direct involvement of the SME owner or manager (Putni, and Sauka, 2010). In order to make correct judgments and take actions that support the organization's vision and mission and promote company growth and sustainability employees and organisations should be autonomous (Malan, 2016). Autonomy can also be described as an individual or group's independent action in conceiving of and carrying out a vision (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). In the framework of an entrepreneurial orientation, autonomy is unquestionably a crucial element of the production of entrepreneurial value at the core of the idea of strategic entrepreneurship. Through autonomy, latitude is given to beef SMEs employees to make decisions and to partake of entrepreneurial creativities leading to organisational value creation, an aspect central to the ideology of strategic entrepreneurship

This research asserts that autonomous actions have positive implications in small and upcoming firms such as the A2 beef SMEs competing for space in the business arena where opportunities are versatile. There is a need for timeous decisions making to take advantage of market opportunities presented by the volatile environment. According to Boscoianu *et al.* (2018: 3498 – 3507) beef SMEs face opportunities, uncertainties and risks posed by Zimbabwe's dynamic environment present opportunities and they should be quick in making decisions to evade threats and utilise opportunities. SMEs' depth of autonomous behaviour is affected by the extent to which leadership is centralised and the frequency at which management delegate authority and place reliance on technical expertise of the intellectual property within their structures (Ali & Xie, 2021:30). As a result of the envisaged direct link between autonomy and competitive aggressiveness to entrepreneurial orientation, the next section will interrogate the concept of competitive aggressiveness and will end by illustrating the simultaneous link of autonomy and competitive aggressiveness to entrepreneurial orientation.

2.1.1.2 Competitive aggressiveness

Lumpkin and Dess (1996), in Stambaugh *et al*., (2020:148), integrated the concept of competitive aggressiveness (CA) into the entrepreneurial orientation (EO) construct. They defined it as a firm's propensity to directly and intensely challenge its competitors to achieve entry or improve position, that is, to outperform

industry rivals in the marketplace. Covin and Covin (1990:38) noted that a propensity for aggressive competitive behaviour is a key characteristic of an entrepreneurial top management style. This is aligned to promulgation by authors like Lechner and Gudmundsson, (2014) and Hughes and Morgan (2007) who strongly urged entrepreneurs to strategically employ competitive aggressiveness.

Aggressive market behaviour may prompt the beef SME company to take steps like lowering pricing, implementing aggressive marketing tactics, or enhancing product capabilities (Guven, 2020:229-245). In other instances, businesses use this entrepreneurial orientation to increase market demand or gain economies of scale. Beef SME company might act aggressively in the marketplace by drastically reducing prices to gain market penetration. However, this approach might not work for businesses with limited resources because they might not be able to lower product costs since they can't function at the maximum level of economies of scale (Blumentritt & Danis, 2006). Small businesses like A2 beef cattle SMEs must be more proactive to outperform the market competition in order to build a safety net for their existence. This is because small businesses are more susceptible to changes in market competition.

A2 beef cattle SME businesses must constantly be aware of environmental dynamics, react aggressively to rivalry, and stay one step ahead of the competition. In a competitive market climate, aggressive product development, customer support systems, and excessive product adaptability are requirements. Competitive aggressiveness is about heating harder on the rivals (Giachetti, 2016:325-352). It is the researcher's assertion that competitive aggressiveness in A2 beef SMEs will resonate well with an environment where employees have the autonomy to make decisions and act promptly upon them in the absence of the red tape of going through the bureaucratic process of approvals from owners. The fig 2.1 below illustrates the link of autonomy and competitive aggressiveness to entrepreneurial orientation.

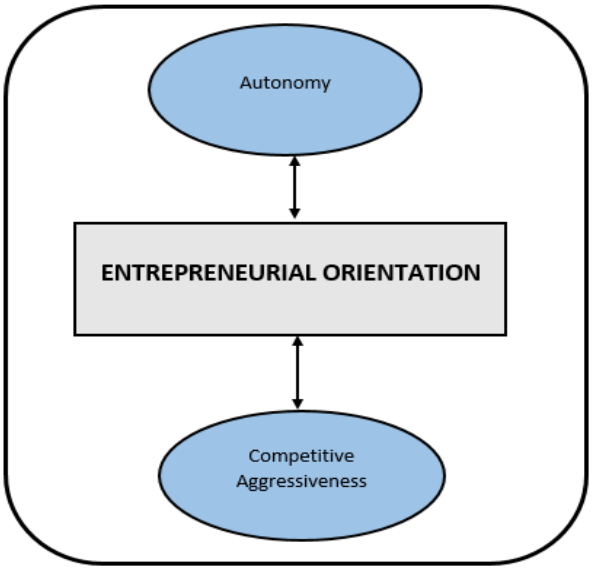

Figure 2.1:Linking Autonomy and Competitive Aggressiveness to Entrepreneurial Orientation.

The figure 2.1, depicts how entrepreneurial orientation is underlined by autonomy and competitive aggressiveness using these dimensions. Beef SMEs can participate in a sustained, unique series of behaviours to challenge rivals and improve their relative competitive position. From a different angle, competitive aggression in this context is related to the idea that A2 beef SME firms must be vigilant, focused on success, and constantly fight to protect their competitive position by using both proactive and reactive strategies to ensure survival and sustainability (Forés, 2019:6299; Lumpkin & Dess, 2001:434).

Although these sub-dimensions are proxies for firm behaviours resulting from this orientation, they are unable to quantify unobserved characteristics like propensity for risk taking (Hughes-Morgan *et al.*, 2018: 73-82). In this study, the beef A2 SMEs must resemble a very high appetite for competitiveness to ensure sustainability of their operations but must take risk aspect into consideration in the process. The next section will interrogate the aspect of risk taking in entrepreneurial orientation relating beef cattle SMEs.

2.1.1.3 Risk Taking

As argued by Magnuson (2018:1167), taking a risk entail taking drastic and fearless action, which may entail entering uncharted new markets or even borrowing large sums of money to invest in projects whose results are uncertain. A dangerous decision is one that is made in a circumstance where the decision-maker is fully aware of the potential negative consequences (Magnuson, 2018:1167). Companies who don't take chances in volatile conditions will lose market share and struggle to keep their competitive edge (Seo, *et al.*,2021:10).

lin dynamic situations, there is a greater link between organizational risk-taking and company performance (Seo, Woo, Mun & Soh, 2021:10).

Risk taking in beef SMEs in dynamic environments where factors revolve continuously involves commitment of resources in volatile environment where positive returns to investment are not guaranteed. The Zimbabwean beef SMEs environment is perceived to be volatile and risky for any investment. However, the beef cattle SMEs must take the bull by its horns following the high-risk high return approach. However, just taking risk alone may not suffice but any risk-taking manoeuvres must be augmented with innovative initiates to steer these beef cattle SMEs through the environmental challenges.

2.1.1.4 Innovation

Ferreira *et al*. (2020:102) highlighted that incremental innovation is the outcome of learning how to do things more effectively while utilizing current capabilities that help create competitive advantages. Innovative resource blending is the source of radical innovation, which results in the creation of new competitive capabilities that lead to competitive advantage (Afuah, 2020). According to the theory of "creative destruction" advanced by Verhoef et al (2021:889), a firm creates wealth when the status quo market structures are upset by the introduction of new goods or services that may transfer resources from existing firms and assist new firms in flourishing. This argument resonates well with the cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe who are operating in an extremely disruptive environment as there a positive co-relationship between innovation and firm performance (Ali & Xie, 2021:30). Innovative beef SME firms should introduce new means to serve their customers and new ways to differentiate their offerings and or services from those of rivals (Liu & Atuahene-Gima, 2018:20). As they roll out new goods and services, businesses gain market share, improve operations, and increase their chances of survival (Tang & Murphy, 2012:41).

Therefore, the A2 beef cattle SMEs should be open to supporting innovation, creativity, and experimentation in the introduction of new goods and services, as well as leadership in adopting cutting-edge technology. They should to run their businesses and conduct research and development on cutting-edge approaches to animal management. In order to position themselves to take advantage of opportunities given by the external environment while building on their internal strengths, beef cattle SMEs must be aware of both internal and external dynamism in their decision-making processes (Bess & Dee, 2012). They however need to minimise and counter possible threats caused by the adverse conditions emanating from the external environment, concurrently diminishing the adverse implications of their internal weaknesses. For the achievement of this,

more of pro activeness than reactiveness should be embedded in the operational culture of the beef cattle SMEs and hence the next section will interrogate the aspect of pro activeness.

2.1.1.5 Pro activeness

Opportunity seeking and forward-looking behaviour by a firm is termed pro-activeness (Amarakoon, *et al.*, 2019:55). This involves the introduction of new ways of running business operations, outpacing rivals and acting in anticipation of forecast future demand to cause change and impact the business environment (Amarakoon *et al.*, 2019:55). Al-Mamary, *et al*., (2020:.270-278.) in described pro-activeness as the way in which firms relate to market opportunities through seizure of such opportunities.

In this study, pro-activeness by beef SMEs is an opportunity seeking behaviour, forward looking perspective involving the introduction of new ways of doing business to enhance competitiveness to increase beef production (Coleman & Adim, 2019:454-465). A firm must be proactive in seeking out chances and must have the tenacity and to react to competitors' moves. This is accomplished through seizing opportunities in a timely manner and generating demand. Pro-activeness, according to Mele et al. (2018:28), also encompasses the skill SMEs actively modifying the environment to one's own advantage. This involves becoming acclimated to challenges halted by rivals, termed as "competitive aggression."

2.1.2 Linking entrepreneurial orientation to Strategic entrepreneurship

The strategic entrepreneurship idea and the entrepreneurial orientation construct are strongly associated, and as a result, they are directly related and are supported by each other when applied to SMEs that deal with beef cattle (Covin & Monsen, 2020:639; Stambaugh *et al*., 2020). In order to capture the full spectrum of entrepreneurial orientation in beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe, this researcher determined that it is worthwhile to include all five dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation. This is because strategic entrepreneurship in beef SMEs is centred on opportunity seeking and advantage seeking behaviours (Hughes *et al.,* 2021:202). While taking advantage seeking behaviour is focused on exploitation and maintaining a competitive edge, opportunity seeking behaviour is focused on identifying and/or creating entrepreneurial prospects (Ireland & Webb, 2007b:50; Ferreira & Coelho, 2020:255).

Beef cattle SMEs must continuously look for ways to improve their operations and must assure sustainable growth and survival through advantage-seeking strategies in order to sustain their operations. The idea of entrepreneurial orientation is that successful exploitation of entrepreneurial possibilities leads to the development of advantage-seeking behaviours that result in a durable competitive advantage (Cooper et al., 2000:121; Lee & Liu, 2018:8; Tabares *et al*., 2021:321).

The A2 beef SME enterprises are able to see the demands of their customers both now and in the future, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of their rivals and other market forces that may affect their business. As a result, they can act properly to maintain their entrepreneurial focus. Entrepreneurial attitude may improve a firm's competitive edge, boosting potential market intervention plans for beef SMEs to follow (Schröder, *et al.*, 2020:26). These advances close market gaps by providing clients with additional value through incremental and/or radical innovation, ultimately generating wealth.

2.1.3 The role knowledge management in A2 beef SMEs sustainability.

Employee knowledge regards operational activities of an organisation is critical mass to its successful growth endeavours (Murray, 2013:3). Manesh *et al.,* (2020:300) conceptualised knowledge management as an act of storing, growing, and sharing knowledge to enhance the knowledge base of staff for the ultimate benefit of the organisation. Knowledge is an asset to the organisation including all aspects of handling and overseeing all the knowledge that exists within the organisation. Grimaldi *et al.* (2017:90) alluded knowledge management to be the art of leveraging the organisation's intangible assets. According to Hoksbergen, et al. (2021:113), knowledge can be split into either explicit, tacit, or implicit. Skills easy to articulate and understand and to transfer to others are explicit knowledge also as formal or codified. Knowledge that is difficult to comprehend, package and transfer to others is tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is difficult to teach like innovative thinking. Implicit knowledge. It is information that has not yet been codified but that would be practical to teach.

Knowledge management regarding beef cattle rearing strategies, techniques and disease management should be embedded in beef cattle owners and managers. A2 beef SMEs that manage organisational and individual knowledge better will deal more successfully with the challenges of the new business environment and are better able to steer their organisations to greater growth levels. Such capabilities are useful in realising and sustaining organisational success for improved efficiency, innovation, and competitiveness in beef SMEs (Long *et al.*, 2018: 84).

A2 beef cattle SMEs should utilise knowledge management effectively and generate market and business intelligence that gives a firm ability to understand customer's preferences, competitor's actions, technology dynamics, focusses on long term benefits, survival and growth and the best business strategies applicable to specific business set ups. Inter-functional coordination within the firm guided by given systems and procedures becomes a critical aspect, which allows different individuals to share market and other business activity information and take appropriate measures or actions (Mutha, Bansal and Guide, 2022:141). Through

the utilisation of an entrepreneurial mind-set, entrepreneurs should easily identify opportunities presented by the environmental factors and exploit them ahead of competitors (Bajdor et al., 2021:3595). The internal business environment augmented by effective knowledge management and application of systems and procedures is hence a source of opportunity identification and such is important to establish a solid entrepreneurial mind-set to aid in identifying opportunities most likely to be attractive (Ricci, Battaglia & Neirotti, 2021:108). In a competitive and dynamic environment that requires aggressive approach to market development, a strong knowledge management thrust is essential in achieving organisational goals.(Agarwal and Sambamurthy, 2020:243). Coupled with proper instructional coordination of resources of resources and hence the following section will elucidate on the critical role of inter functional coordination.

2.1.4 Inter functional coordination of resources within the A2 beef cattle SMEs

Lambe, (2014) assert that the firm's knowledge, information, and intelligence must be properly managed to minimise it being terribly fragmented, dispersed and even contradictory. As such, inter-functional coordination has to do with harnessing internal resources together and aligning them with the strategies being employed in pursuit of organisational growth and sustainability (Mpandare & Li, 2020:3913). Inter-functional coordination leads to the origination of critical resources which are unique, and which help in creating competitive advantage especially in situations where the SMEs have inimitable, valuable, rare competences that are not easy to be copied by competitors.

It is essential for beef cattle SMEs to critically evaluate, identify, and communicate the best resources, information, and/or knowledge the company is in possession of to guarantee that there is understanding among employees. The inter-functional coordination's strategic goal is to create a result-driven environment for these SMEs focused on beef cattle (Liao, 2018:125). Along with a dynamic capacity approach, coordination and reconfiguration is crucial for organizational competencies to create a competitive edge, according to Qureshi *et al.* (2020:3271), the growth and sustainability of A2 beef SME enterprises are enhanced by well-coordinated resources. However, all these variables aid in successful function of SMEs requires the enabling environment as provided by the government and hence the following section will interrogate the role of government policies and framework for beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe.

2.2 Government policies and framework for beef cattle SMEs.

The strategic entrepreneurship framework of most economies across the economic spectrum depends on the creation of appropriate government policy for the growth, development, and performance of beef SMEs and SMEs in general (Ifekwem, 2019:201). Lack of government support policies limits SMEs' ability to

increase growth and performance. According to Ifekwem (2019:201). Strategic plans and policy memos reflect government policy, which is then interpreted and implemented through rules and regulations, manuals, requests for proposals, contractual agreements, and enforcement actions. The advancement of SMEs in the developed nations has been achieved by the policies that supported the performance of SMEs. It is in this vein that the government policy has a great bearing on the performance of the SMEs.

In Zimbabwe, government policies are put in place to ensure plans and initiatives are actioned upon and provide the basis for beef cattle SMEs to become innovative and hence enhance performance and growth (Nurul 2016:14). While studies have shown that government policies and legislations are key enablers for the emergence and development of SMEs, these policies and legislations in some cases may led to the demise of SMEs in some countries (Veronica *et al.*, 2020:100995), Enjola and Entenbang (2015:335) argued that, depending on how laws are developed and implemented, the government can either be a facilitator or a hindrance to SME sector development. Oni and Daniya (2012:14) and Shariff et al. (2010:11) also opined that most developing countries have invested considerable amounts of resources and efforts to support SMEs with a view to increase productivity, employment and income security of household such as the case of A2 beef cattle farmers in Zimbabwe. It is disappointing to note however that the current A2 policy by the Zimbabwean government has led to decreasing beef cattle production over the past twenty years, as argued by Tambudzai *et al.*, (2022:11).

OECD/ERIA (2018) outlines three primary approaches for SME policy development and stated that, a range of ways do exist when formulating SME policies, but the policies must be guided by the objectives, aims and outcomes. The aims and outcomes must inform the policy formation processes and direction as shown in Table 2.1

Table 2.1: SME policy formulation strategy

Overarching goal	Specific goal
Macro objectives	• Creation of employment • Economic development • Export growth
Social objectives	• Income redistribution

	• Poverty alleviation in developing countries
Correction of market failures / inefficiency (static efficiency objectives)	• Presence of externalities • Market access barriers • Asymmetric information • Small number of competitors • Information imperfection (lack of access to information about potential markets) • Levelling the playing field
Dynamic efficiency objectives	• Promotion of innovation

Source: Harvie and Lee (2005),

To improve the effectiveness of support to entrepreneurs, OECD/ERIA (2018) outlines three primary approaches for SME policy development and summarised as follow:

- Increased market efficiency. This entails ensuring that all entrepreneurial stakeholders have equal access to the market and encouraging fair competition. Administrative red tape is reduced, resulting in the creation of a free market environment, which encourages beneficial knowledge management and therefore encourages entrepreneurship.

- Support for SME development that is more streamlined and focused. This entails babysitting SMEs by providing direct and ongoing support until they can stand on their own. The focus is on structural support until the deficiencies are eliminated. It aids SMEs in dealing with flaws such as a lack of human and physical capital investment competence, poor research and development, and a lack of economies of scale.

- Being an instrument for improving human welfare. This would result in improved social development and job creation because of huge entrepreneurial backing, resulting in the creation of new job opportunities. Typically, this assistance is focused on the neediest and the creation of microfinance schemes.

It is governments' mandate to alleviate poverty, promote community standards, and create jobs for their citizens (Edoho, 2014: 129). Governments pursue public policies aimed at resolving societal issues that the countries face. As a result, SME development is a tool that allows people of all levels and abilities to contribute to economic development. However, the Zimbabwean A1 and A2 Model introduced in 2002 have not achieved the outcomes guided by this approach and there is a need to rethink how policies, institutions, and learning processes are handled and improved in the country regarding beef SMEs.

In Asia, SMEs Policy frameworks are enacted to provide an independent SMEs policy environment that are benchmarked against goals enshrined in the Strategic Action Plan for SME Development (SAP SMED, 2016-2025). While in the European Union (EU), they have recognized that by maximizing entrepreneurial potential and capability of union membersstates, challenges facing entrepreneurs amongst union members states are easily managed (Wessels, 2011:53). As such, the Small Business Act's Dimension 1 of the European Commision (EC, 2013) and the EU's 2020 Entrepreneurship Action (European Commission, 2013) both emphasize the importance of entrepreneurial learning in developing the entrepreneurial orientation needed in a competitive business environment. In developing countries such as Zimbabwe, policies that encourage SMEs development are often constraints by multinational corporations that dominates economic activities in every sector of the economy.

2.2.1 Beef cattle SME Performance and economic contributions

One of the main drivers of economic growth, women's empowerment, and job creation in both developing and industrialised countries is the overall SME success (Ariyo, 2008:46; Kpleai, 2009:38, Birch 2011:41; Storey 2014:55). Studies by Edom et al. (2015:22) have demonstrated that all SMEs, including beef SMEs perform with pride in all countries due to the crucial roles that they play in the growth and development of varied economies. SMEs have been referred to as "the engine of growth" and "the catalysts for socio-economic development of any country" (Zafar & Mustafa, 2017:6). Given its significant contribution to economic performance and social well-being, a robust small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) beef cattle ranching industry is crucial to the prosperity of any economy's beef sector (OECD/ETF/EU/EBRD 2019:44). It has been noted that overall good SME performance is a powerful aspect in the development of the economies of many nations (Ibid, 2019:44) . The success of beef agricultural SME has a significant influence in the health of any country's economy, particularly in Africa where most economies are agriculturally based.

Agriculturally based SMEs employ and use more labour per capital than other businesses sectors (Farouk & Saleh, 2011:9; Eniola & Ektebang, 2014:5). Beef cattle and downstream SMEs contribute towards generating new jobs, reducing poverty, generating wealth, and improving pay gaps and income distribution (Kraja & Osmani, 2013:28; Majama & Magang, 2017:11; Tiemo, 2012:9). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in beef cattle sector are a global force to be reckoned with, thus the current governments must actively monitor and encourage their success. These results unmistakably show how crucial the beef sectors of SMEs can contribute to economic development.

2.2.2 Zimbabwean beef sector policy framework

The National Livestock Development Policy (NLDP) of Zimbabwe is a key policy among the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation Development (MAMID, 2014-2018) policies. This policy's mandate is assisting stakeholders in assimilating into the supply market. It entails guaranteeing ethical business practices from the commercial companies involved in the development of livestock market infrastructure, particularly in remote areas, and the promotion of indigenous cattle. Furthermore, the EU-Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP) was linked to this policy with the principal goal-to assure the functionality of the beef cattle value chain service framework. However, on the ground, the functionality of the cattle value chain is not functional leading to the persistent decline in beef cattle production.

In 2013, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET, 2013-2018) was developed with the goal of increasing meat production by 400 000 tonnes between 2013 and 2018 as one its goals. On the contrary, the introduction of these policies came with a further decline in the national herd. The "Command Livestock, Fisheries, and Wildlife Program (ZCLFWP)" was established in May 2017 in Zimbabwe as part of the economic transformation agenda. The goal was to improve and enhance the supply of animal-based goods to meet national and export requirements. The strategy was implemented through public-private partnerships with the banking sector for three- to five-year loans offered to beef cattle farmers. The strategy was also intended for the construction of standard infrastructure for drinking and feeding lots as well as dipping tanks. But this strategy has not been accepted by beef cattle farmers who have questioned the economic viability and feasibility of such programme. Apart from Statutory Instrument (SI) 79 OF 2017 and under the administration of Agricultural Marketing Authority, the government has not supplied appropriate information as informative follow up to this policy (Beef Value Chain Analysis in Zimbabwe, 2019:86).

The Zimbabwe Leather Strategy (ZLS, 2012-2017) is enshrined in Livestock sector policy, with the goal of reviving the Zimbabwe leather industry. In the policy strategy, women and youths are encouraged to participate in livestock production through National Gender Policy (NGP) policies, the National Youth Policy (NYP), and the Prevention of Abuse Act (PCA) administered by the Ministry of Environment. However, there was no mechanism to ensure that all these instruments are accessible to beef cattle farmers (Beef Value Chain Analysis in Zimbabwe, 2019:86).

2.2.3 Review of SME policies and impact in Europe, Asia and other African states.

It should be noted that in terms of policies, most nations have overall policies for SMEs at large of which sectors like beef cattle SMEs are part of the bigger picture SMEs policies. Nations would not really have SME policies per sector and hence the literature reviewed in this section generally oscillate around all SMEs with beef SMEs being incorporated within.

The importance of reviewing literature in relation to countries whose growth has been significantly aided by the success of the SME sector in general, of which beef SMEs are within that framework, is to have a benchmark for the framework being developed. Feasible, specific references to SMEs engaged in beef cattle ranching have been provided. The next section will interrogate the European policy effects on beef SME performance.

2.2.3.1 European policy' effects on beef SME performance

According to the OECD/ETF/EU/EBRD, (2019:16), significant progress has been made by EU economies in formulating SME-friendly policies, relieving SMEs of the burdensome and time-consuming administrative tasks. This has aided the region's SMEs in operating more effectively. According to Schmiemann (2008:16), the European Commission launched the Enterprise Europe assistance network on February 7, 2008, as a one-stop resource to help businesses reach their full potential and creative ability. It includes 500 contact locations dispersed throughout Europe that help businesses achieve their expansion and growth goals.

The Western Balkans and Turkey (WBT) have well-articulated SME strategies and have worked continuously to reduce the administrative clatter on the SMEs and a result their SMEs have continued to do well. They have made their laws and public procurement processes to reduce barriers of performance among SMEs (OECD/ETF/EU/EBRD, 2019:24). It's a given that an SME policy that is well developed addresses the needs of its local entrepreneurs leading to greater sector performance. Since SME policies are generally all

encompassing across all SMEs, the beef SMEs sector would also automatically benefit under the same banner.

2.2.3.2 Support for SMEs from European governments

The European Commission has committed to seriously supplying resources for beef SMEs. Numerous programs were implemented to aid the cattle industry and other SMEs. A crucial governmental tool for addressing the financial constraints faced by beef and other SME is the credit guarantees schemes (CGSs). According to Brault and Signore (2019:17), these programs are a key component of the European Commission's (EC) 2000-era policies supporting SMEs in other industries, including the European beef industry. The Multi-Annual Program for Enterprises and Entrepreneurship (MAP) and the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Program (CIP) are two programs that reflect the two main advancements of the EU-level credit guarantee program, the SME credit Guarantees.

The European Investment Fund (EIF) is essential in addressing problems that SMEs encounter when attempting to access financing through a variety of financial intermediaries, including banks, leasing companies, guarantee funds, mutual guarantee institutions, promotional banks, and other intermediaries, according to Kraemer-Eis et al. (2019:5). In essence, the EIF provides financial guarantees for SMEs as well as financing for cattle and other SMEs. The EIF provides guarantees and counter-guarantees for portfolios of microcredits, SME loans, or leases in addition to the security of SME financing instruments, as further indicated by Torfs and Gvetadze (2016:11). The EIF administers and executes a number of mandates on behalf of the European Commission as well as national and regional Managing Authorities in light of these occurrences. The following section will look at the Asian Tigers SMEs policies impact on the performance of beef SMEs.

2.2.3.3 The Asian Tigers SMEs economic contributions

It is well known that Asia's major economies, including those of India, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, and South Korea, have thriving SME sectors that account for between 70 and 90 percent of employment and an estimated 40 to 50 percent of their respective GDPs (SBC,2015:13). As it dominates all production sectors and accounts for most of the Asian wealth creation, the SME sector is the backbone of the economy of Asian nations. This SMEs in general narrative within the Asian Tigers scenario can be triplicated into the SME beef sector since the beef SMEs are part of the bigger SMEs whole sector at large.

The flourishing SME sectors in Asia's great countries, particularly in India, Indonesia, China, Malaysia, Japan, and South Korea, are projected to provide over 40% of each country's GDP and between 70% and 90% of all employment in those countries (SBC,2015:39). Zimbabwe can use the success story to refocus its SME policies particularly A2 beef SMEs and create some performance-oriented strategic frameworks by drawing on the numbers. This study builds a strategic entrepreneurial framework to enhance beef production, which in part fills that gap. By implementing the effective programs that have been put in place in these Asian states, Zimbabwe may completely transform its economic status.

Asian countries are very strong in terms of policies that are highly supportive of sustainable beef SME sectors and hence they can be used as very good role models of success in the beef SME sector. Asian countries have done so well in ensuring their beef and other SMEs become the hub of their economic development through providing the enabling environment (Adebiyi, 2014:67). Prelove and Angulo-Ruiz (2014:24) argued that SMEs in Japan's primary industry sector extension programmes are provided by more than 262 centres of public technology research centres offering a variety of services to SMEs in the form of research and development and various aspects of training.

South Korea and Malaysia have put in place solid measures that are very supportive to the SMEs sector thereby contributing to the very high economic growth and lower death rate of SMEs (Majone, 2016:17). They have introduced policies supportive to SMEs growth and sustainability in a bid to create employment (Lui *et al.,* 2019:87).

This has been achieved through the concerted efforts to support SMEs in areas of Innovation & Technology Adaptation, Human Capital Development, Access to Financing, Market Access, and Infrastructure. Such programmes need to be undertaken by Zimbabwe to establish viable SME beef sector underpinned by strategic entrepreneurial frameworks that can be counted as one of the African giants.It is crucial that Zimbabwe places a specific emphasis on beef SMEs and create broad strategic entrepreneurial frameworks it can use to promote them. The Asian nations may offer their technological know-how and practical expertise in assisting the Zimbabwean beef cattle SME sector. The beef SMEs in Zimbabwe can produce meet and related products for export, boosting the GDP, generating employment, and competing with any goods on the international market. The Zimbabwean government should take inspiration from Asian nations and improve the performance of SMEs generally and A2 beef SMEs specifically.

2.2.3.4 Policies made by the BRICS and SME beef performance

The BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries developed policies that are helpful to improve the performance of SMEs in general. These beef SMEs policies emphasize treating small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) cooperatively in Local Productive Systems (LPS), which calls for the implementation of policies that promote collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the mobilization of local productive and creative systems (Arroio & Scerri, 2014:49).Brazil's policies, which follow a global trend toward realizing the need to adopt a systemic approach to the growth of innovation and competitiveness of SMEs and individual agents, have a clearer focus on business clusters, beef SMEs, and SMEs in general (Arroio & Scerri, 2014:52).

The Brazilian SME program gave special attention to the SME industry as a whole and made use of the related industries' competitive advantages, including their ability to share ideas and progress collectively rather than individually. Payers in the beef SMEs sector are actively taking part in all of these changes and making use of the system's advantages to advance their companies. The government had to show a high level of commitment to the implementation of the policy in order to achieve the challenging policy objective of supporting effective learning and innovation in LPS. The success of SMEs in Brazil has been aided by the government's support of various programs.

The development of a policy in Russia to support SMEs led to the sector's growth as a major step toward economic diversification. Throughout the entire process, the beef SME sector has played a very active role (Dubrova, Ermolina & Esenin 2019:20). The performance of the beef SMEs, which are making a significant contribution to the nation's economic growth, has been greatly influenced by India's SME program. The government has taken it upon itself to advertise the products of the SMEs, and the policies are centered on the needs of the SMEs. In fact, the Indian government has a policy program that tackles every aspect of SMEs, which has greatly aided their development, growth, and performance. The focus of the next part will be on Chinese government support for beef SMEs (Muzapu et al., 2016:91).

Zimbabwe may take inspiration from the BRICS nations and seize opportunities to improve the performance of its SMEs in general and the beef SMEs in particular. Emerging markets, especially the BRICS, have been a powerful global engine for trade, investment, and poverty reduction, encouraging growth in the Asian, Latin American, and African regions, according to Gu et al. (2016:8). Zimbabwe and the BRICS share similar goals, which is good, and are both close to South Africa. In order to better serve its beef SMEs, Zimbabwe can

emulate an excellent program that India developed for SMEs. Its institutional network for promoting SSIs (small-scale industries) is extensive (Muzapu et al., 2016:6). In order to strengthen its capacity for the development of SSI product export and global competitiveness, the Indian government launched initiatives to encourage SMEs. These include providing workshops for SSIs to coordinate ISO-9000 certification and quality awareness, as well as assisting SMEs in marketing their products by organizing international trade shows. The government gave export promotion for small-scale industry products major attention. Zimbabwe should take inspiration from India's government's unwavering backing of SMEs, which have subsequently grown to be competitive on the international scene. Zimbabwe has a multitude of exploitable natural resources that could be essential to the growth of the beef SMEs industry.

2.2.3.4 The Chinese government's assistance to beef SMEs

China is rated third in the world for beef production since the country's beef business represents a significant part of its livestock and meat output (Zi Li, 2018:8). China's economic transformation is unprecedented in scope. With a population of 1.3 billion, the average annual growth rate is expected to be 9.5% for the past two years. China is now among the biggest producers and consumers of agricultural goods worldwide (Ibid, 2018:8). As a result of legislative changes and trade openings, the Chinese beef business has grown quickly, making it one of the livestock sector's fastest-growing industries. Due to the regulatory reforms that have been enacted, China is now viewed as a significant player in the global beef sector in terms of production, consumption, and trade. This is consistent with Zi Li's (2018:11) assertion that the reforms have made a significant contribution to China's position as the third-largest producer of beef in the world and the largest in Asia.

While all these developments were happening across the SMEs divide, the beef sector of China being part of the whole SMEs benefitted immensely from all these manoeuvres and hence also its massively improved performance. It is crucial for this study to interrogate the South African policies for benchmarking, it being a neighbour and a major trading partner to Zimbabwe with lot commonalities in terms of similar climate amongst other aspects. The next section will hence look at the South African government’s support for beef SMEs

2.2.3.5 The South African government's support for beef cattle SMEs

The core BB-BEE policy is intended to support the growth of beef SMEs in South Africa, with one of its main goals being to increase SMEs' access to capital (Hirsch & Levy, 2018:11; DTI, 2007:5). Juggernath (2013:8226) asserts that B-BBEE makes facilities for SMEs to get financing as evidence for her claim. Empowerment of SMEs has positive ripple effects to the economy of any country hence the government had

a wonderful vision for empowering the locals through the financial resources which are a crucial part of the business operationality and sustainability (Tambudzai *et al.,* 2022:9). In every functional economy, as opined by Arshad *et al.* (2020:702), SMEs overall, including beef cattle SMEs, are a significant source of employment in the country and hence beef cattle SMEs must be created and supported.

The B-BEE strategy placed additional emphasis on the training of beef cattle and other SME owners and operators' human resources and skills. Research and development is a key component of policy for the growth of SMEs. The government will offer a wide range of courses, such as technical training, financial management training, strategic planning, and marketing, to prepare beef cattle SME operators. The indigenous people would benefit from such trainings by being better equipped to manage their organizations. In South Africa, SMEs have been prioritised as a vehicle for black empowerment, and as a result, the growth of SMEs is a motivation for black empowerment (Musabayana & Mutambara, 2020:7).

2.2.4 The other African policies and performance of beef cattle SMEs

Several African nations have put in place measures to encourage the development of beef and other SMEs in general across the board. Policy discussions in African states continue to centre on the importance of SMEs to the development process. This also because they comprise most of the business population in most countries, and hence play a crucial role in the economy (Epede & Wang, 2022:10).

The government support policy framework moderates the impact of modern marketing and entrepreneurial aptitude on the performance of SMEs in Nigeria (Ibrahim and Mustapha, 2019:14). Strategies and programs used by the government and its regulatory bodies to influence and determine decision-making processes that promote economic growth by ensuring that the environment is suitably protected for the SMEs' business operations make up Nigeria's government support policies for SMEs (Wakili *et al*., 2016:18). The SME policy of Nigeria placed increased emphasis on the performance of business owners, product marketing, and protecting SMEs from outside competition that would reduce demand for domestic goods.

The Nigerian federal government implemented procedures to lower taxes for SMEs including beef cattle SMEs in order to achieve this. The action promoted inclusive economic growth by assisting beef cattle and other SMEs in thriving (Daniel & Esther, 2019:78; Osinbajo 2015:14), who noted that the Nigerian government decides to engage more with SMEs and entrepreneurial activities to ensure sustainable economic development and wealth creation through supporting the sector, reiterated these comments. By developing

policies that created a favourable environment for SMEs to operate in, the Nigerian government demonstrated its support for beef SMEs.

The Botswana government has created several policies to help beef cattle SMEs operate better. The Financial Assistance Policy (FAP), which was established in 1982, marked the start of the financing strategy for SMEs overally (AFDB/OECD, 2005:38). This policy's primary goals were to encourage investment in sustainable economic activities and to boost small business development (Khanie, 2018:6). Following the adoption of the Small Medium Micro Enterprise (SMME) Policy in 2001, the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) took the place of the FAP program, which had some implementation issues. CEDA's objective is to offer loans to enterprises at discounted interest rates (LEA, 2009). Through its policies that encourage the growth of SMEs and the participation of all stakeholders, the government of Botswana has demonstrated its ongoing support for SMEs. To better serve the country, it has promoted research and development on its policies. The purpose of the Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA), an independent trust with operations beginning in 1995, is to educate policy and develop capacity through research and consulting services (Khanie, 2018:6). The Government of Botswana contributes to the funding of BIDPA because it helps the government be more impartial in the development, application, and evaluation of its policies.

According to Ndola & Moto (2019:15), the Malawian government has placed a strong emphasis on implementing policies that encourage beef and other SMEs. Malawi acknowledges the role that micro, small, and medium-sized businesses play in fostering competitiveness, job growth, and income distribution. The Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurial Training Authority (TEVETA), the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Institute (SMEDI), and the Malawi Rural Development and Enterprise Fund (MARDEF) are a few examples of public organizations the Malawian government reorganized to develop the entrepreneurial mind set of the populace (Ndala & Pelser, 2019:4).

With the goal of boosting entrepreneurship development in the nation through the delivery of entrepreneurship education and training (EET), the Malawian government launched a large campaign to promote higher education institutions (HEIs), both public and private (Delaney *et al*., 2019:173). The improvement of beef and other SME performance through entrepreneurship education was the program's primary goal. To advance the SME industry, the Malawian government has taken part in exchange programs with China that are financially sponsored. Various assistance programs for SMEs are being provided across the nation, according to the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT) (2015:33), by various government agencies

and institutions, including the private sector (Ndala & Pelser, 2019:6). It is obvious that government policies have created a favourable climate for the growth of SMEs in Malawi.

2.2.5 The influence of the Zimbabwean policies on the performance of beef cattle SMEs

The government of Zimbabwe implemented the Zimbabwe Industrial Development Policy and the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Policy in an effort to boost the country's economy through supporting the beef cattle and SMEs sector in general. These policies mainly targeted the black entrepreneurs to drive the economy.

The National Policy and Strategy for SMEs provides the framework and lays out methods for the implementation, coordination, and monitoring of the SMEs to support the growth and development of the sector, according to Magaisa and Matipira (2017:41). The creation of the policy framework has as its primary goals the creation of long-term jobs, the reduction of poverty, the stimulation of growth, and the generation of foreign exchange earnings. Another goal is the creation of an environment that will enable Zimbabwe to double the number of small businesses. The importance of SMEs was highlighted by Wang (2016:3), who argued that in developing nations like Zimbabwe, SMEs are crucial for promoting growth and economic development. Zvarivadza (2016:9) agreed, stating that most SMEs are the result of individuals or groups of individuals that have the will to create and maintain successful firms (Zvarivadza, 2018:19). By creating an enabling environment, the policy's primary goal is to improve the performance of SMEs. Due to the adoption of indigenous policies in Zimbabwe, SMEs have emerged as the primary economic drivers of the new economic system, replacing international corporations**.**

2.2.6 The USA government and beef SME support

The financial support provided by the US government to the beef SMEs and SMEs in general has a significant impact on how well they perform. Support in the form of loans, guarantees, and equity has an impact on the performance of the beef industry and other SMEs. Government guarantees and equity have a direct impact on the performance of new firms, according to research conducted in the USA on the subject. The study evaluated the effects of government financial support measures like loans, guarantees, and equity on firms' overall performance (Fernando et al., 2014:8). In many nations, including the USA, microfinance programs are a means of eradicating poverty and stabilizing incomes (Hameed, 2019:15). The success of beef and other SMEs in the USA depends heavily on government supervision of the SMEs. Financial support is essential to the development of the SMEs, and their performance is closely correlated to the financial support received.

SMEs had access to credit, and this became the US government's top focus, with the 2013 budget providing $16 billion in loan guarantees from the Small Business Administration (SBA) (Pergrlova & Angelo-Ruiz, 2014:33). Additionally, the US government provides $18 million in direct loans to intermediaries so they can make small loans to start-up business owners and $4 billion in Small Business Investment Company (SBIC) debentures to support new enterprises. The US routinely ranks among the top in direct government support for company innovation as a proportion of GDP in international comparisons among OECD countries. OECD (2012:37 highlights the significance of new and small business growth in US support policies. The US offers a perfect example of determining the impact of government financial support on the performance of SMEs given the crucial role that entrepreneurship plays in the American economy and the increased recognition of the significance of support for new and small businesses. As a result, Zimbabwe draw lessons from the US when creating a strategic entrepreneurial framework for the beef SMEs sector.

2.2.7 The economic contributions of SMEs in African states

SMEs are crucial to the economic development of any nation, but this is especially true for developing countries (Ahmed, 2018:4). It is estimated that the SME sector in African economic powerhouses like South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, and Kenya accounts for over 70% of employment and 30% to 40% of GDP (Munyanyiwa 2009:10). In Kenya, the Small and Medium Enterprise sector contributed 18.4% of the country's GDP and employed 74.2% of all workers in that year (Republic of Kenya, 2013:58). Around 85% of Ghana's manufacturing jobs are held by SMEs (Abor 2010:5). Abor (2010:5) highlights the significance of SMEs in fostering growth, providing jobs, and aiding in the fight against poverty (2010). The main subject of this section, which also covers the function of SME, will be the performance of the various economies in Nigeria, South Africa, and Botswana.

2.2.7.1 Contribution of beef sector to Botswana economy

As alluded by the Private Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2014, Botswana exported US$116.6 million worth of beef being 1.5% of all exports. Beef production makes making up less than 2% of Botswana's GDP. Estimated 2.2 million cattle are in Botswana with 88% in the hands of small communal farmers, often with very small holdings, practicing traditional, less efficient, methods. Botswana is a neighbouring country to Zimbabwe and the two nations have a lot in common in terms of climate and other variables. Zimbabwe can learn a lot from the Botswana scenario and use that to turnaround its beef cattle fortunes given that Botswana is a major supplier of beef in Southern Africa.

2.2.7.2 Contributions of SMEs and beef SMEs in Zimbabwe

Bennet *et al.,* (2019:21) made an inference into the impact of the Zimbabwe beef sector into the economy, social impact, and environmental sustainability of the country. The Lome convention of 1975 followed by the FTLRP of 2002 led Zimbabwe into intensive land reform in which intensive commercial farming was the main objective of the beef sector through massive exploitation of market opportunities. Scoones *et al* (2010:13) note that Zimbabwe underwent a period of intensive land reform culminating into the large-scale transfer of farmland from Commercial farmers to small-scale farmers leading to the decline of lartge scale commercial farmers from about 4000 to about 725. Somewhere between 161,500 and 300,000 households have resettled on about 4.9 million hectares (Scoones *et al*, 2010:13). Large scale commercial farms have declined from 4,000 to about 725. A plethora of new farming SMEs have been developed as a result.

The contribution of the beef sector to Zimbabwe can be assessed in three aspects namely:

1. Financial viability: - It has been noted by Institute de L'Elevage (2013:76) that all types of farming Zimbabwe are reflective of profitability, especially where capital costs and family labour are excluded from the costing structure. The widely differing business objectives are a key factor. Commercials and partly Commercial farms are profitability driven with partially Communal and Communal farms make profits coincidentally but they primary aim being to address other objectives such as: risk management, savings, social capital, status, milk production, and draft power. Other actors in the overall value chain resemble strong profitability, in particular abattoirs whose profitability has been established to be in the range of 20-40%.

2. Impact on the national economy. The consolidated operating account as of 2019 reflected that the total value of contribution by the beef sector was US$427,363,320, representative of about 27% of total Agricultural GDP and about 1% contribution to the gross national income of the country. This is indicative of the fact that growth and contribution to the economy is also very high (Bennet *et al.*, 2019:23).

3. Growth inclusiveness. Production and transformation at a high level of 55% of net income is indicative of high inclusiveness as propounded by Bennett *et al.*, (2019: 42) is indicative of very high levels of inclusiveness in the value chain. Furthermore, with farmers retaining about 31% of the income from the value chain, this would represent, to a large extent the return to family labour across the different farming models. The aspects of worker wages have become relatively small in the beef value chain (11%) indicative of the fact that the structure of the farming systems is oscillating around family as opposed to hired labour models.

About 49% is retained in the trading and processing, culminating in a large proportion of total value chain income.

The beef and other general SME frameworks from other nations in the African continent and abroad have been looked at in this section, with a clear focus on what Zimbabwe can learn from the same frameworks implantable in the Zimbabwean context. Over and above lessons that can be drawn from the above, there is need to interrogate the technical support mechanisms relevant for beef cattle SMEs applicable to Zimbabwe and hence the next section will interrogate that.

2.3 Technical support mechanisms for beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe.

The government technical support mechanisms are provisions made by the government to technically support the beef cattle SMEs to ensure the beef cattle businesses sustainability. Such technical support mechanisms include skills development (Asikin *et al.*, 2020:7020). Technical support mechanisms expected in beef cattle SMEs include skills development, disease control, monitoring and evaluation, research and development and infrastructure development (Ridwan *et al*., 2020:50).

2.3.1 Skils development

To ensure that beef SMEs are intellectually prepared to professionally manage their operations, skills development is required (Hu & Kee, 2022:1036-1056). As a result, the implementers demand government support to help the firms function on a daily basis. Training in general business administration topics, including fundamental accounting and record keeping, is part of skill development for beef SMEs. This is consistent with what Zotorvie (2017:29) opined that there is great importance in recording keeping by SMEs to track performance and alignment to laid down business procedures. The government is mandated to be imparting such knowledge to these SMEs through training workshops in that regard

For beef cattle SMEs, basic knowledge and understanding of animal husbandry should be a prerequisite to ensure the prevalence of the relevant sustainability. Such understanding includes feeding routines, disease identification and basic treatments at lay levels, dipping routines and injection routines and procedures among others (Busse *et al.,* 2015:55). It is the role of the government to ensure that such important skills are imparted on the A2 beef SMEs who are a sector created by the government itself in pursuit of the vision for sustainability of themercial beef sector.

2.3.2 A2 beef SMEs monitoring and evaluation

Beef SMEs monitoring and evaluation by government entails follow ups on the operations of the beef SMEs to ensure compliance with the expected laid down systems and procedures (Busjeet, 2013). Monitoring and evaluation are necessary to establish whether SME and entrepreneurship policies are being successful in meeting their objectives and to identify how they can be improved. Evaluation needs to be robust and systematic, making use of control groups and allowing comparison across programmes.

As expressed by OECD/ETF/EU/EBRD, (2019:5), better monitoring and evaluation results in well-informed, evidence-based policy decisions that help SMEs perform better. According to a recent report (OECD/ETF/EU/EBRD, 2019:5), the EU policymakers have developed SME monitoring tools to keep an eye on the important programs.

The notions of record-keeping in relation to business efficiency and farm finances are generally understood by farmers. The influence of agriculture on the environment should also be examined in order to evaluate the sustainability of an agricultural operation given the growing awareness of environmental issues and the fragility of the natural resource base. Despite keeping a variety of records, many producers rarely use them. Today, there are many top-notch computer applications that address this issue by simplifying computations and providing a lot more in-depth evaluation of productivity and business performance (Sahoo, 2019). The A2 beef SMEs expect the government to assist in these issues in line with the government mandate to business to provide an enabling environment.

2.3.3 Research and development (R&D)

The creation of new information occurs through research and development. It is a task that companies perform in order to develop new products, processes, or services or to improve ones that already exist. Businesses frequently take on risk to do this. This is because they are dubious of whether their technological endeavours are feasible or, more commonly, they are unsure of how they will achieve their objectives (Souto, 2015:142).

The government's research and development initiatives would help the A2 beef SMEs by updating them on the most recent and cutting-edge inventive ways to conduct business in that industry. The effectiveness of such institutions would be improved by being aware of the most recent approaches for best resolving the scientific difficulties encountered in the beef cattle industries. Some businesses won't be able to conduct R&D internally, therefore the government intervention in that area would be helpful (Selviaridis, 2020:44).

Many R&D leaders strive to speed up development while also creating more effective future and roadmaps. Creating an innovative culture across the A2 beef industry is frequently the responsibility of the government, not always at the level of individual businesses. The A2 beef SMEs growing a firm through R&D is a common aim, but it is also difficult to do unless the government steps in to take on that task (Selviaridis, 2020:44). Since developing new products or improving old ones is a method for a firm to stay profitable and competitive, R&D is a crucial role.

Research and development on the most prevalent animal diseases will put the beef cattle SME firm in a better position to face disease concerns. Additionally, it puts the beef cattle companies in a position where they are prepared to respond to additional marketing and general management difficulties. Rapid shifts in customer needs and evolving technology necessitate constant adaptation, leading to the creation of new business models that follow current business environmental trends (Holliday *et al*., 2017).

Another important component of A2 beef SME R&D is the ongoing assessment of current business practices, services, and procedures. A2 Beef SME businesses run the risk of stagnating and stalling if a method of conducting business, offering a service, or carrying out a procedure is no longer viable or adds value. With the assistance of the government, technologies must be developed that might enable adjustments that would cut costs, improve efficiency, or promote safety in the operations of beef SMEs (De Clercq *et al*., 2018:11) R&D is essential to businesses because it provides in-depth knowledge and insights and motivates improvements to present practices that increase productivity and save costs. It also gives businesses the opportunity to develop novel products and services that will help them compete in cutthroat markets.

The A2 Beef cattle SME's ability to grow and compete in the market depends on R&D. A business that can innovate, adopt new technologies, and improve existing operations has a higher chance of long-term success. The benefits of R&D on a bigger scale apply to entire industries and benefit the economy. When the government invests heavily in R&D, including assisting people in the actual world, it will advance and achieve more (De Clercq *et al.,* 2018:11-13).

R&D, corporate expansion, and economic expansion are all positively correlated. Since R&D incentives are intended to increase productivity, they frequently constitute a part of a government's ambitions to expand its economy. The next section will examine the role of infrastructure development since effective research and development mechanisms must be well enhanced with the crucial infrastructure development to provide the desired results.

2.3.4 Infrastructure Development

If beef producers want to create and maintain a successful, sustainable business, they need to have a comprehensive awareness of many different elements. Sustainable pasture management, the preservation of biodiversity, good stock management, considering animal welfare, and many more are among them (Fuhlendorf, Engle, Elmore, Limb & Bidwell, 2012:579-589).

The most valuable resource on this continent, good quality water, must be used as effectively as possible. The performance of A2 beef SMEs paddock layout will be impacted by the presence of watering stations, which may also restrict the amount of subdivision that is feasible on grazing properties. Cattle will overgraze near water and underglaze the remainder of the paddock if watering sites are spaced too far apart. Long distances to water will cause cattle to expend energy and gain weight more slowly (Rojas-Downing, *et al.,* 2017:145-163)

There may be times when A2 beef SMEs need to supply water in troughs or underground tanks. When cattle use natural streams, the streams often deteriorate, causing sedimentation, pollution, and sometimes algae blooms downstream. The inside of bends, where there is a high potential for erosion, may be damaged by cattle accessing stream water if water troughs are not available. This would degrade the stream. Additional infrastructure, including as feed lots, fences, dip tanks, and dam building, is also required (Rojas-Downing *et al*., 2017: 163).

The government is hence also expected to weigh in with the provision of such infrastructure development on the basis that it is the advocate and sponsor of the fast-track land reform program which gave birth to the A2 beef SMEs of Zimbabwe. Cattle fattening facilities, good road networks and the relevant marketing facilities are some of the infrastructure development aspects expected to be seen on the ground, which the government is expected to undertake.

The absence of such infrastructure is causal to substandard quality and quantity of final product and hence defeating the whole purpose of the A2 beef SMEs model. There is a serious lack of up to standard transport and communication network and this stalls proper transportation of both materials for use in the A2 farms and transportation of the final product to the market. Such a scenario obviously has negative implications on the business operations. Having interrogated the technical support mechanisms as they relate to beef cattle SMEs, the next section will look at relevant management strategies for beef cattle SMEs through reviewing the strategic frameworks that have been successful elsewhere.

2.4 Management strategies for beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe.

Governments and their institutions have the power to affect how well-performing beef SMEs perform. Public policies of a nation or region have an impact on entrepreneurial dynamics through the implementation of policies favouring entrepreneurship, such as the building of a general institutional structure perfect for the development of entrepreneurship (Sobel et al., 2007:223). Being the creator of policies, the government is required to commit its support by creating a climate that is favourable and allocating funds. Financial, human, knowledge, and skill resources can all be categorized as resources that help SMEs perform well.

The financial support of the government has been highlighted as one of the key factors enhancing the performance of beef SMEs, therefore SMEs' access to money is essential to the success of the beef small enterprises. The performance of beef SMEs and bank loans are fundamentally related. One of the main obstacles to the development of beef SMEs is a lack of finance and credit availability. They are unable to acquire the needed resources that would increase their productivity and competitiveness as a result. Additionally, beef SMEs need the appropriate scientific knowledge in the fields of veterinary science and other areas (Henry, 2021:23). In addition to financial resources, beef SMEs must also be fiercely competitive to survive and get a competitive edge in this highly dynamic business environment (Ibrahim and Mustapha, 2019).

2.4.1 What Zimbabwe can learn from BRICS as Critical Success Factors

Zimbabwe can identify the crucial elements that A2 beef SMEs can adopt and execute to improve their performance based on the literature from the BRICS nations. The BRICS region backed the policies they created, which led to significant improvements in beef SME performance. The various BRICS countries prioritised governmental policies for beef cattle SMEs and SMEs in general, and as a result, the SMEs' contributions to each country's GDP increased. SMEs involved in the beef cattle industry are also at the centre of these developments and have benefited substantially as a result.

The Local Productive Systems (LPS) idea, which entails designing policies that support collaborative efforts, promote information exchange, and mobilize regionally productive and creative systems, served as the foundation for the Brazilian government's agricultural SME policy, for instance (Arroio & Scerri, 2014:122). With innovation and the development of human capital as the two most important resources for the success of SMEs, this strategy was created to increase the SME sectors. Brazil's SME programs for beef have a stronger emphasis on clusters of businesses and SMEs in terms of innovation and competitiveness (Arroio & Scerri, 2014:122). Through numerous programs that involve research and development, education, training, and financial support as major drivers of SME performance, its main focus is on the empowerment

of the implementer of the beef SME. This approach has shown to be successful and produced great outcomes in Brazil; Zimbabwe might use it for its development program for SME and beef cattle.

As stated in the Forecast for Long-term Social and Economic Strategic Development of the Russian Federation up to 2030, "small and medium-sized companies are the key and indispensable component of any established economic system" (2013: 06). It was evident from the policies that the government wanted Russian SMEs to succeed. The government encouraged creative endeavours to increase domestic goods' competitiveness on the world market, and the economy's diversification resulted in increased support for SMEs (Pinkovetskaia *et al,* 2019:6-15). Zimbabwe may gain from the successful growth strategy used by the Russians and improve the performance of its SMEs and the beef cattle SME sector. The BRICS group is a prime example of how well-developed and supported government projects work. Zimbabwe can now identify the programs that can be in line with its environment and obtain good performance from beef SMEs thanks to the government's determination, which has produced productive outcomes.

2.4.2 Zimbabwe's beef SME support and the lessons learned from ASEAN SMEs

Zimbabwe has the great potential to accelerate the beef production through A2 beef cattle SMEs. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries have adopted the value addition and value creation processes to grow the economies of the member states. This has been inclusive of the beef production through SMEs. The ASEAN countries identified SMEs in all other sectors as the engine of economic growth and development and hence the backbone of national economies, the highest employment-generating sector, and a potential tool of poverty alleviation by creating self-employment avenues (Alary *et al.,* 2011:4).

SMEs at large also play an irreplaceable role in promoting technological innovation and creativity through strategic entrepreneurship endevours thereby invigorating the national economies. China and the ASEAN countries have long awakened to appreciate the importance of all SMEs in promoting international economic and trade linkages, promoting complementary advantages, enhancing bilateral trade, promoting economic restructuring, reducing poverty and narrowing the gap between rich and poor (Liao & Luo, 2020:173). The ASEAN countries enacted two tools which are helping them achieve high performance of the SMEs: The ASEAN Policy Blueprint for SME Development for SME Development (APBSD) 2004-2014 and the ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for SME Development.

The goal of the ASEAN Policy Blueprint for SME Development (APBSD) 2004-2014 is to accelerate the development of beef and other SMEs. It must be perceived as boosting the dynamism and competitiveness of ASEAN SMEs by making information and markets more accessible and fostering the growth of human resources and their skills (OECD, 2021:13). Zimbabwe can adapt and modify the ASEAN countries' strategy to make it suitable for the A2 SME environment there. Zimbabwe must create a strategic entrepreneurial framework to help SMEs in A2 establishments that have received land under the Fast Track Land Reform Program increase the production of beef (FTLRP).

2.4.3 Lessons to be drawn from other African States by Zimbabwean beef cattle SMEs

Zimbabwe has the ability to compete on a global scale and increase the productivity of SMEs involved in the beef industry and SMEs in general. If the government is committed to assisting the beef cattle SMEs, Zimbabwe can attain the excellent performance of SMEs that has been observed in other African states. If Zimbabwe uses its highly educated population and takes advantage of the benefits of the land reform program, which made land available to SMEs, as well as the natural resources such as minerals, farming soil, vegetation, and wildlife reserves, it has a great chance of becoming one of Africa's giants in the beef cattle SME sector.

Eniola (2014:30) highlights the fact that SMEs make up over 90% of Nigerian firms, 95% of its formal manufacturing activities, and 70% of its industrial enterprises. According to research by the IFC, SMEs make up roughly 96 percent of Nigerian firms and account for over 90 percent of the manufacturing industrial sector in terms of the country's total number of enterprises, making them a crucial component of the Nigerian economy (Oyelarin-Oyeyinka, 2010:1-13). Included in these overall SME statistics are beef cattle SMEs as well. According to Ebiringa (2011:85), Nigeria identified five critical areas where SMEs may contribute to the country's economy. Each of the five strategic points had the support of the government, and the intended results were achieved. By deploying strategic entrepreneurial frameworks across a range of SME sectors, including the beef cattle SME sector, Zimbabwe may learn from this strategy and improve the performance of the beef cattle SME and other SME sectors.

92 % of the people in Malawi work for themselves, their families, or small firms in the small and medium-sized enterprise sector overrally (Ndala & Moto, 2019:44). Ghana's sector is dominated by SME, which presents a potential to accelerate economic growth, wealth creation, and poverty reduction (Awiagah, 2015:34). SMEs in Ghana account for about 92% of businesses and 85% of manufacturing jobs, contributing about 70% of Ghana's GDP, according to Abor and Quartey (2010:22). (GDP). The majority of producers in

Botswana are SMEs. These African countries show the Zimbabwean government that SMEs may perform well and have the potential to boost the nation's economy. Zimbabwe can take the evidence from the African countries as a sign of hope in its efforts to improve the performance of SMEs in particular areas, including the beef cattle business. Zimbabwe urgently needs a strong beef cattle SME strategic entrepreneurial framework for these accomplishments to be realized; as a result, the following section will examine the qualities of an efficient strategic entrepreneurial framework.

2.4.4 The qualities that distinguish an effective SME strategic entrepreneurial framework

An effective SME strategic entrepreneurial framework is created to support the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programs with the goal of enhancing SME performance generally across the board. There are several strategic frameworks that have been developed by various governments, stakeholders, and international organizations and have been successfully implemented to improve the performance of SMEs and other organizations, as opposed to strategic entrepreneurial frameworks for specifically beef SMEs. The European Union, Asian nations, the BRICS, and several African governments have been used as examples.

2.4.4.1 Goal Programming Model

Yadav *et al.* (2010:14)'s goal programming model is a multi-criteria approach that addresses the drawbacks of the single objective framework by using accounting proxies for many objectives in the framework. The following is a list of the procedures used to develop the company's strategic framework.

• Involvement of stakeholders

• The use of accounting proxies in the analysis of objectives, goals, and policies.

• Creation of a paradigm for goal programming.

Testing the model and solution, as well as finalising its application.

Agarwal (2018:7) claims that a decision-making framework for multi-objective capital structure using accounting proxies was evaluated using an Indian agricultural enterprise. It was found that the framework makes it possible to fulfil many objectives and constraints at once. It has been shown to be highly beneficial to firms in achieving an optimal or satisfying practical solution to capital structure decisions encompassing multiple goals in an organized and methodical manner. This is because it allows accounting information to match the complex and dynamic business environment of today (Agarwal *et al.,* 2010:16). These steps were done to develop the company's strategic framework.

2.4.4.2 Small Business Green Action Plan

Another excellent example of a well-designed and realistic strategic framework for SMEs is the Green Plan (GAP), which was created by the European Commission. For SMEs, the European Union established this in 2014. Its goal was to improve their environmental performance and seize possibilities created by the global transition to a greener economy (European Commission, 2017:46). The following topic areas are used to group the objectives.

Greening SMEs to increase their sustainability and competitiveness. Better resource efficiencies, supported by information, advice, access to priced financing, and technology transfer methods, are being developed to help SMEs lower production costs.

1. **Opportunities for SMEs in a greener value chain**. Offering the needed support to SMEs to enter circular economy activities like re-manufacturing, repair, maintenance, recycling, and eco-design through the elimination of value chain barriers, promoting collaboration and the promotion of new business models anchored on efficiency and the reuse of materials and/or waste.
2. **Access to new markets for green SMEs**. Growth-supporting actions aimed at helping SMEs access new markets through the promotion of a greener internal market, enabling access to international markets, and facilitating green technology uptake in partner countries.
3. **Governance**. Control, monitoring and evaluation, co-ordination amongst EU member states and SME stakeholders, and consultations on SME policy developments and progression.

The Green Action Plan emphasizes the advantages of coordinated action to eliminate redundancy and increase impact in light of this all-encompassing approach to supporting the greening of SMEs. The similar strategy might be used in other countries and at the national level (European Commission, 2017:52). The benefits of resource efficiency, increased productivity, and competitiveness resulting from the circular economy, as well as the existence of a variety of resource efficiency activities that may be accessed under various EU programs, should be made known to SMEs via the Green Action Plan (European Commission, 2017:52).

2.4.4.3 The Guanxi Chinese SME Strategic Framework

SMEs in China are currently driving the country's economy, especially privately held companies. These SMEs are the outcome of a strategy plan designed to improve SMEs' performance. Private SMEs had become a mainstay of most regional economies by the middle of the 2000s. Since 1992, the Chinese government's top

priority has been to increase the overall quality and competitiveness of the domestic SME sector. (Chen, 2006). The SMEs of today benefit from these developments. One of the main reasons why Chinese SMEs have grown is the adoption of a strategy that allowed them to develop in accordance with their nature and conditions (Li, 2004:559-564).

Guanxi, defined as "the existence of direct particularistic links between one or more individuals," is the centre of the Chinese business culture. Tsui and Farh (2007): 474 Guanxi ties unquestionably play crucial roles in the growth and success of SMEs in China (Clegg et al., 2007:107). The characteristics listed below served as the primary motivators for the Chinese SMEs strategic framework:

- When compared to processes of a comparable nature in the West, where an emphasis is placed on formal, explicit, and information-loaded procedures, internal management processes are more dynamic and flexible (Gibb, 2006:63).
- When compared to processes of a comparable nature in the West, where an emphasis is placed on formal, explicit, and information-loaded procedures, internal management processes are more dynamic and flexible (Gibb, 2006:63).
- Rather than focusing on short-term revenues, their strategy was allegedly to develop capabilities with a cost-minimization effect. Companies of this type can avoid competition from established foreign joint ventures and Chinese state-owned enterprises by minimizing costs (SOEs) Chen (2006:12), (2006:12),

Beyond the inherent cost-savings benefits of SMEs generally, the strategic framework sought to further lower their operating expenses by locating affordable resources, streamlining production procedures, and copying Western product designs. Most of these businesses created no-name goods using low-grade materials, competing on price rather than quality. Chen (2006:4),

2.4.4.4 Nigeria SME Strategic Framework

According to Osinbajo (2015:13), the neglect of the SMEs sector for more than 40 years caused major problems for the Nigerian economy. Eventually, a strategy framework to boost the performance of SMEs was developed by the government and its stakeholders. The implemented strategy plan includes the following elements.:

- A proactive measure to aid in overcoming the obstacles (Wakili, 2016:6)
- A commitment by the government to encourage SMEs to diversify; • A confirmation of this promise by the Nigerian President at the 2016 Economic Summit Retreat in Abuja, Nigeria (Sotubo, 2016:16).

- The Nigerian federal government decreased taxes for SMEs to support their growth and advance inclusive economic expansion (Wakili, 2016:6). Through the Nigerian Customs Services, the Nigerian government banned the importation of goods that can be sourced and produced in Nigeria. This is meant to encourage the indigenous SMEs to strengthen their market potentials thereby improving also their productivity and performance (Omonobi and Bivbere, 2016:8)
- In order to ensure sustainable economic development and wealth creation, the Nigerian government commits to work more closely with SMEs and entrepreneurial endeavors (Osinbajo, 2015:5).

Numerous benefits were observed when the Nigerian government's commitment to enhancing the performance of SMEs was considered, as Okeke *et al.,* (2016:5). mentioned 90% of Nigerians have meaningful employment thanks to SMEs, according to data available, demonstrating the effectiveness of a well-designed and supported SME strategy framework.

2.4.4.5 Framework for Ghana's Industrial Policy

According to Newman et al. (2016:17), Ghana's external trade sector's policy focus in relation to the industrial policy framework is to use trade policy to advance the global competitiveness of domestic businesses, ensure that these businesses improve their export competitiveness, diversify their markets and boost exports, and hasten economic integration with other regional and/or subregional countries/states. The following significant trade policy efforts served as the principal guiding principles for the implementation strategy in their industrial policy framework:

Keeping actual exchange rates competitive.

2. Enhancing the import-export system.
3. The Ghana Competition Commission was established to address unfair practices in global trade.
4. Creation of a National Agency for Consumer Protection.
5. Marketing fresh products and services.
6. Making the most of preferential access to markets including those covered by the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the EU-ACP, and sub-Saharan African (SSA) sub-regional trading blocs.
7. Fully participating in multilateral trade talks.
8. Improving connections between trade and industrial policies.

2.4.5 The National Innovation System (NIS)

Economic policies of the BRICS countries are based on the National System of Innovation (NSI), with the performance of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), government finance, and direct investment as

the main areas of analysis (Arroio and Scerri 2014:7). According to Arroio and Scerri (2014:7), the NSI takes into account various actors and factors that have an impact on the development, adoption, and diffusion of innovations in addition to the roles played by businesses, organizations dedicated to education and research, and STI policies. As a result, the national character of SI is justified. There is also a lot of focus on the significance of historical processes, which explain the variations in socioeconomic capabilities as well as for various growth trajectories and institutional evolution.

According to Cassiolato and Lastres (2008:3), the NSI's broad viewpoint encompasses many, interconnected sub-systems that are influenced by a variety of settings, such as geopolitical, institutional, macroeconomic, social, and cultural elements. The three NSI subsystems are described as follows: Production and innovation is the first subsystem, which considers the structure of economic activities, their sectoral distribution, level of informality, spatial distribution, size distribution, level and quality of employment, and the type and quality of innovative endeavour. Second, there is a subsystem of science and technology that consists of training, research, and education (basic, technical, undergraduate, and postgraduate), as well as other components of the infrastructure for science and technology, including information, metrology, consulting, and intellectual property. Third, there is a sub-system of policy, promotion, finance, representation, and regulation that includes various public and private policies, both expressly and implicitly aimed toward innovation or those that, while not necessarily geared toward it, have an impact on innovation strategies. The role of demand, which is typically shockingly lacking from most assessments of SI, is the final factor. This component covers social organization, consumption patterns, income distribution patterns, and social demand (basic infrastructure, health, education).

The national innovation system framework, according to Arroio and Scerri (2014:6), is based on the following school of thought and understanding:

• Innovation capacity results from the interaction of economic, social, political, institutional, and culture-specific factors with their environment, necessitating the use of a more comprehensive analytical framework than traditional economics (Freeman 1982, 1987; Lundvall 1988). These influence the character, breadth, and capacity for innovation of their interactions (Mytelka 2000:2; Johnson and Lundvall 2003:11);

- The fundamental components of knowledge are incorporated in the bodies and minds of agents or ingrained in business practices and interactions between businesses and organizations. As a result, they are specialized and difficult to transfer from one setting or context to another, as knowledge is more than just information (Lundvall 1988:11)

- The emphasis on interactive learning and the localized nature of innovation production, assimilation, and diffusion imply that importing foreign technology from other countries cannot replace local efforts (Cassiolato and Lastres 1999:7) National framework matters, as development trajectories contribute to shape specific systems of innovation. The diversity of NSIs is a product of different combinations of their main features that characterise their micro, meso and macroeconomic levels, as well as the articulations among these levels (Freeman 1987:23; Lastres 1994:1)

According to Arroio and Scerri (2014:9), the SI approach is useful for less developed countries (LDCs) precisely because (a) its fundamental concepts allow for the consideration of their socio-economic and political specificities and (b) it does not ignore power relations when addressing innovation and knowledge accumulation. Policy prescriptions presume that the process of development is impacted by and reflects the unique environment of each country, rather than on suggestions taken from the reality of advanced countries, and it also takes into account their social, political, and historical complexity (Cassiolato and Lastres 2008:2). It serves as the base upon which locally developed strategic frameworks can be created and put into action using local resources, concepts, and creative ideas. In order to build a strategy framework for Zimbabwean SMEs that will enhance the performance of the SME sector, this study will draw heavily from the FSI.

2.4.6 The use in real life of the strategic entrepreneurial framework for beef SME's effects

The government's role in creating a climate that is conducive to entrepreneurship and the SMEs' own entrepreneurial orientation are what determine the strategic entrepreneurial framework for beef SME's applicability. SMEs are urged to adopt entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management, collaborations, and business ethics to develop competitive advantages that would result in superior performance. The study has empirically demonstrated that the conceptions of knowledge management, collaborations, business ethics, and entrepreneurial orientation—all of which were taken from the literature on entrepreneurship and strategic management—are elements of strategic entrepreneurship.

The beef cattle production involves the upstream, midstream and downstream activities. The upstream involve activities such as supplies of the beef cattle to the A2 SMEs from various sources. Midstream is all about production the production of beef cattle for the market through the conversion of young animals into marketable grownups or feeding the malnourished into healthy and marketable beasts. The final stage being the downstream which then includes marketing, branding and other related activities.

The process of procurement starts the product transformation process. Most procurement activities are aimed at initially finding potential suppliers of beef cattle meeting the requirements for relevant beef cattle supplies

needed by the A2 beef SMEs (Assan, 2008:5). The activity of a business with reputable suppliers for beef cattle and other connected items required in providing services necessary to help fulfill the actual demand of final beef customers is referred to as the procurement operation. However, achieving such success depends on cultivating relationships with suppliers that can guarantee an improvement in the outcomes of business operations, conditions, and the anticipated outcomes of cooperation (Munyoro et al, 2018:35). Future procurement methods will be influenced by important variables such as the list of potential substitute suppliers, the adaptability of supply, and supplier contracts. Such criteria take into account the current environment, which is characterized by the 30 dangers of numerous corporations going bankrupt and the specter of economic mayhem (Kubiak, 2020:451).

Customer satisfaction is said to be greatly influenced by logistical and procurement activities. Finding and keeping dependable suppliers, negotiating their terms of cooperation, evaluating them, maintaining assumed stock levels, reducing stock costs, ensuring a smooth flow of goods, cooperation and integration with other parts of the enterprise are all included in the relevant subsystem (Kolisk *et al.,* 2016: 38). According to Web Finance (2017:12), productivity is the average indicator of a production system's efficiency since it represents how well a person, system, or piece of equipment converts inputs into usable outputs. According to Stevenson, Operations Management, (2009:14), productivity is stated as the output-to-input ratio and serves as a summary indicator of both the amount and quality of work performance as well as effective and efficient resource utilisation. Productivity can be used to gauge the effectiveness of a production system, increasing competitive advantage (Levary, 1991:8). According to Teklemariam (2004:3), productivity is related to how well a corporation uses its resources. She also says that productivity is used to gauge how well an organization satisfies the following standards: Objectives- to what degree do they achieve the organisation objectives, efficiency –how efficiently are organisation resources used to generate useful output , effectiveness –the achieved throughput compared to what is theoretically possible.

The three main processes of entrepreneurship development process which are innovation, development of products, services or new processes and risk-taking as stated by Nieman, (2019) are mainly conducted in the midstream. The production of products and services takes place mostly in the midstream, where the SMEs' horizontal and vertical linkages occur. As a result, networking with all the stakeholders is crucial. The major entrepreneurial processes are developed and put into practice at this stage.

To assist marketing managers in making wiser judgments, marketing strategy research is a goal (Reibstein et al., 2009:41; Varadarajan 2010:105). Using the right marketing strategy is essential for business success,

and selecting an efficient strategy requires knowledge of the different alternative marketing strategies that are available as well as an understanding of how they function under various organizational and environmental conditions. Varadarajan (2010: 119) explains the importance of a marketing strategy in the establishment of a business by noting that:

> "Marketing strategy is an organization's integrated pattern of decisions that specify its crucial choices concerning products, markets, marketing activities and marketing resources in the creation, communication and/or delivery of products that offer value to customers in exchanges with the organization and thereby enables the organization to achieve specific objectives."

According to Morgan et al. (2019:17), there are three key categories that make up marketing strategy: I inputs, which include resources like market knowledge, brand portfolios, financial resources, etc., and capabilities like NPD and CRM; (ii) outputs, which include customer "mind-set" and behavior outcomes, as well as market and economic performance; and (iii) environmental factors that are separate from marketing strategy. Advertisement, warehouse, storage, distribution, retail, and point of sale are additional activities that fall within this category.

The operations in the product transformation pipeline are connected and ongoing from upstream through midstream and on to the final downstream segment, and this is an important fact to keep in mind. The interconnectedness of the processes ensures effectiveness through the efficient operation of business systems and procedures.

2.4.7 The pragmatic synthesis of the SME strategic entrepreneurial framework

According to Knoben *et al.,* (2019:2463), a framework is made up of a collection of straightforward structures that are very simple to understand and that are easy for companies to embrace in a systematic fashion for successful implementation. To improve performance matrices, the synthesis of a goal-oriented strategic framework emphasizes the importance of being aware of local needs, identifying lean drivers and barriers, identifying suitable tools, stakeholder involvement, having a clear understanding of the entire supply chain activities, and the benefits connected with participation in the implementation of the proposed strategic entrepreneurial framework reward system (Bhamu & Sangwan 2016:6). The pragmatic approach to its synthesis prioritizes the key players who will implement the produced framework, and they are the primary consideration when designing the strategic entrepreneurial framework.

It is crucially important to build a strategic framework in a corporate setting so that practitioners may clearly comprehend the necessary components and conditions for successfully applying the framework (Jia Yuik & Puvanasvaran, 2020:157). According to a systematic evaluation of the literature (Yusof & Aspinwall,

2000:452), a good framework for strategic entrepreneurship must have the following requirements, which are seen to be applicable in any context the framework is intended to address:

- Systematic and simple to grasp
- Simplified in design
- Needs to have obvious connections between the listed items or steps
- Not context-specific
- Must have an implementation road map and planning tool
- Must succinctly explain "how to?" rather than "what is?" the initiative approach
- It must be universal (Implementable in all situations).

The majority of developed strategic entrepreneurial frameworks look strong and significant on paper, but in fact they typically lack a plan for implementation, aren't rigorous, and don't have enough program monitoring. According to advice given by Chin and Rafuse (2013:4), Gunasekaran and Lyu (2007:5), the implementation of a strategic entrepreneurial framework must start with training and educating all the stakeholders so that they are aware of the pertinent intended aims of that framework (2011:8). A similar opinion was presented by Mihaela (2020:12). He mentioned that the practitioner's first step in creating a strategic framework for entrepreneurs is raising awareness, then comes training to cultivate an entrepreneurial mind set, enhancing entrepreneurial capacities during the implementation process, and finally enhancing entrepreneurial effectiveness, which is performance related. According to Chay (2013:4), the established strategic entrepreneurial framework should be generally understandable and has addressed most of the essential needs for implementation. In order to meet the requirements of the concept it is designed to solve; it is also believed to have been well integrated into the monitoring and evaluation. These crucial elements were underlined by Jia Yuik and Puvanasvaran (2020:157), who also stated that for a strategic entrepreneurial framework to be validated, it must meet the following criteria. These criteria serve as a guide for the strategic framework's evaluation process: Is the majority of the crucial LM implementation components covered by the framework?

- Is the framework clear enough to be understood?
- How do M&E SMEs think about this implementable framework?
- Do you have any feedback on the advantages or disadvantages of this framework?
- Recommendations for improvement (if any).

The involvement and empowerment of the implementers, who must be able to comprehend and adopt the strategic framework through simple steps beginning with the strategic framework's overarching goals and continuing through its monitoring and evaluation, is key to the practical guidelines in the synthesis of a strategic framework. The strategic entrepreneurial framework synthesis, according to Jia Yuik and Puvanasvaran (2020:157), may be broken down into four sequential stages that can be summarized as follows.

Identification of lean issues and project planning prior to implementation (Plan).

Lean training and project execution are examples of implementation. Evaluation:

Performance analysis and management evaluation for the lean result and Post Implementation (Act): Maintain a lean culture and engage in continual improvement.

The process of building a strategic framework can be summed up in these stages. They offer the knowledge that this study can draw on to create a more useful strategic framework for Zimbabwe.

2.5 Chapter summary

It follows that the performance of beef SMEs is the product of a network of many inputs since it is often influenced by a wide variety of interrelated and interdependent elements. According to allegations, the government determines the viability and future of the small businesses and establishes the policy environment under which beef SMEs function. The government is in charge of carrying out its plans by providing the appropriate funding, which is especially important for beef cattle SMEs because it is essential to their success. Effective SME policies have benefited successful nations around the world, including the United States and the European Union, according to the pertinent study. The Asian Tigers and the BRICS are making significant investments in SMEs through strong financial support systems, training and skill development, and fully operational research and development departments that support beef SMES. The National System of Innovation (NSI), which integrates socioeconomic and political issues, power dynamics, innovation, and knowledge while taking into account their social, political, and historical complexity, policy recommendations, and reflects the environment of each country, offers the model from which a workable strategic entrepreneurial framework can be developed and the implementing guidelines. Along with other factors, this will serve as the basis for creating a strategic entrepreneurial framework for beef SMEs in Zimbabwe. The subsequent chapter will discuss the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study.

CHAPTER THREE
CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the sections on SME performance and economic contributions, the impact of government policy, technical support, and resources on SME performance, and the traits of a successful SME strategic entrepreneurial framework reviewed the literature in relation to the study's objectives. It provided enlightening discussions on how governmental policies impact the operation of SMEs.

The current chapter presents a review of relevant literature on strategic entrepreneurship with a focus to increase cattle beef production by SMEs in Zimbabwe. There is increasing evidence that SMEs' entrepreneurial activities contribute to economic growth. As a result, countries around the world are developing policies at national as well as international aimed at fostering connections between SMEs in the agricultural sector and other industries, the government and civil society (Mukarutesi, 2018: 89) to optimise benefits. Despite these efforts towards policy direction in the agricultural sector, there is little information available on the incorporation of strategic entrepreneurship principles in policy development (ibid:89).

The theoretical underpinnings for the evaluation of strategic entrepreneurship within the A2 policy framework for beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe are also established in this chapter. The concept of a dynamic business environment and its effects on the success of beef SME businesses in Zimbabwe are also introduced in this chapter. It also identifies the research holes suggested by six theories: the organizational learning theory, the theory of networks, the theory of resources, the theory of dynamic capabilities, the theory of entrepreneurship, and the theory of market orientation. To fill in gaps in the existing research, the study considers entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management, collaborations, and corporate ethics as relevant components of strategic entrepreneurial response.

3.1.1 Beef SMEs alignment to their external business environment

According to Milne, 2021, Kuratko and Audretsch (2009:1), Morris *et al.,* (2008:7), Teece (2007:1319), and others, the open market economic systems and interconnectedness of firms around the world make the

operating environment in which businesses function globally unstable. According to Anderson *et al.* (2018:2), hostile business environments are characterized by unstable industrial structures, fierce competition, a challenging business environment, and few possibilities, as is the case in Zimbabwe. Although future occurrences are less foreseeable, Mufudza (2019:2) and Kuratko & Audretsch (2009:7) have suggested that the volatility and dynamism of the corporate environment are determined by environmental variables that are constantly changing. Environmental elements that affect SMEs' performance in dynamic environments also include technological development, competitive intensity, change in customer behavior, regulatory environment, and demographic change (Baum & Amburgey, 2017:304-326; Ireland et al.2009:28; Morris et al., 2008:4; Mohd, Idris & Momani, 2013, 40).

A2 beef cattle SMEs must devise strategies to efficiently respond to environmental influences to survive and develop guided by the fact that the rate at which environmental elements vary is proportional to the external environment's turbulence (Rodriguez et al., 2017: 133). The current agricultural business environment in Zimbabwe has come with excessive pressure on the new emerging beef cattle entrepreneurs. Vilanova and Vitanova (2020:215-236) allude that external environmental factors have strong impact on small firm viability and growth. The business battlefield has grown to be very dynamic and hence operational viability and survival are massive challenges, not only to large establishments, but the results are more detrimental to SME's owing to their limited resources (Mishra *et al*., 2020:12; Kropp and Zolin, 2005:1; Upton, 2017:1). This limits resources for execution of and taking solid strategic decisions that require resources back up. Beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe having such limited resources may find it difficult to benefit from entrepreneurial strategies since there is dire need for critical resources (Hitt et al.,2007:237; Ireland et al., 2001:55; Zhang *et al*., 2019:88) to back up any strategies they have.

Ensari and Kiygi-Calli (2017:28) alluded that all firms can identify, and grab opportunities presented by the dynamic environment. For A beef cattle SMEs to remain viable and on their feet in such volatile environments depends on their response to challenges posed by the external environment (ibid, 2017:28). For the beef cattle SMEs to be continuously sustainable there is need to devise response strategies to remain abreast with the rate of environmental changes and foster production increase mechanisms. From this background, it becomes imperative that the next sections deep into the evolution of strategic entrepreneurship to address beef SME management bottlenecks.

3.2 Evolution of strategic entrepreneurship

This study's primary theoretical framework is strategic entrepreneurship, with the strategic entrepreneurial model developed by Ireland *et al*. (2003:17) serving as the conceptual framework. An emerging idea called strategic entrepreneurship (SE) combines entrepreneurial and strategic thinking (Tipu & Fantazy, 2018; Ketchen, Ireland & Snow, 2007:27). It describes a company's pursuit of superior performance through the integration of concurrent activity in opportunity and advantage searching (Ireland *et al*., 2003:22; Ireland and Webb, 2007:9). This framework is based on the notion that entrepreneurship and strategic management are complementary disciplines, and that the creation of wealth results from their effective application (Wirtz et al., 2016; Ireland et al., 2003:8). According to the economics of growth, countries can increase their growth rates by allocating resources effectively and efficiently and implementing innovations that increase productivity (Bjormskov and Foss, 2013:7). By putting novel resource combinations to the test in the pursuit of profits while facing uncertainty, strategic entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in this process (Bjormskov and Foss, 2013:7). The identification and exploitation of entrepreneurial possibilities are the main goals of entrepreneurship. It consists of behaviours and attitudes that will help you find and take advantage of business chances in your environment (Belz, Binder, 2015:19). However, SMEs in the beef cattle business must also take a strategic approach if they want to maximize value (Bjormskov and Foss, 2013:12). This entails choosing among alternatives that will provide you a competitive advantage and produce better results than average based on your analysis of the available information (Bjormskov and Foss, 2013:15). Due to this, their business operations must incorporate both entrepreneurial and strategic thinking. To advance Zimbabwe's beef business, it is essential that SMEs in the sector take a strategic entrepreneurial strategy.

The development of strategic entrepreneurship is a direct reaction to this transition as the business environment is constantly changing, creating a competitive landscape that is highly uncertain (Anderson & Eshima, 2018:201). Despite the strategic entrepreneurship discourse's relatively young history, exciting progress has been made in integrating its opportunity and advantage seeking components (Diekman, Steinberg, Brown, Belanger & Clark, 2017:142-175; Ireland and Webb, 2007b:50). The behaviour of looking for opportunities with the goal of spotting and taking advantage of a competitive advantage is fundamental to entrepreneurship. Strategic management is founded on the behaviour of advantage seeking, whose goal is to investigate what it takes to maintain a competitive edge into the organization's unforeseeable future (Koch & Windsperger, 2017:59).

The next section, which is regarded as the foundation of the discourse on strategic entrepreneurship, provides a brief explanation of related ideas including strategy, strategic management, and entrepreneurship to help the reader better understand the notion of strategic entrepreneurship.

3.2 Concept of strategy

A2 beef cattle SMEs must have the capability to act differently from the way competitors do to be able to outwit competition (Haans, 2019:3-27; Porter, 1996:64). All firms operating in any environment, let alone in a disruptive economic environment such as Zimbabwe primarily need competitive strategies to ensure survival and sustainability (Zutshi *et al*., 2021:6542: Agarwal *et al*., 2007:272; Barney and Arikan, 2005:140). SMEs in the beef cattle industry in Zimbabwe must position themselves for long-term competitive advantage, which arises when a company implements value-creating techniques that aren't already being used (Chadwick & Flinchbaugh, 2021:181-207). According to (Waheeda *et al*., 2021: 23; Helfat et al, 2007:1), strategy is therefore essential in a dynamic environment because it equips a company to deal with the volatility offered by environmental changes. The use of strategy by the SMEs in the beef industry is thus a sure means to an end, suggesting that strategy is a collection of what the SMEs in the beef industry would undertake to attain goals. This includes, among other things, the strategies they employ, the things they do, and the choices they make in order to meet their objectives and success criteria (Canhoto *et al.,* 2021:682)

For beef SMEs firms in Zimbabwe to assimilate changes, they need to have adequate flexibility within them. This enables them to be proactive and adaptive in their operations. Such environmental change necessitates that the company adopt creativity and innovation gradually or radically in order to ensure responsiveness to environmental shift requirements and achievement of established goals. The researcher understands that adopting an entrepreneurial strategy is a natural reaction to the changing environmental factors affecting SMEs in the beef cattle industry. A company's strategy should ideally consist of a mix of business methods and competitive actions that managers use to satisfy consumer wants, successfully compete, and accomplish company goals (Paley, 2021:33). Thomson (2003:9) relates to the fact that company objectives serve as a standard to assess the success of the firm and are the firm's performance target results and outcomes that a firm aims to attain (Fernando *et al.*, 2019:8-20). The beef sector value scenario in Zimbabwe is explained below. This scenario can be analyzed using tools like the SWOT analysis.

	Positive	Negative
Internal	Strengths: • Comparative advantage in beef production • Existing infrastructure • Low environmental impacts due to extensive management • Cattle ownership and livestock management is an important source of climate resilience against the negative impacts of climate shock, particularly for communal farming systems	Weaknesses: • Inadequate access to capital • Infrastructure mainly in former commercial areas • Low level of cattle producers' organisations • Failure to control animal diseases with high mortality threatens cattle productivity •
External	Opportunities: • High potential for intensification • Processing and export of beef and beef products (hides) • Strong potential for vertical integration	Threats: • Failure to control trans-boundary disease threatens trade • Wildlife predation • Alternative cheap animal protein (chicken) • Continued economic uncertainty discourages investment • Low consumers' purchasing power

Figure 3.1: SWOT analysis for the beef value chain in Zimbabwe

The above figure is a SWOT analysis for the beef value chain in Zimbabwe. SME beef agribusiness entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe has a highly significant role in the economy as it fosters rural development in the country. Zimbabwe has a very strong potential for development in SME beef agribusiness entrepreneurship due the country's land policy through models A1 and A2 since Zimbabwe has one of the best climatic conditions suitable for beef farming in Africa (FAO, 2018:12). The Zimbabwean beef sector has comparative advantage against other SADC countries owing to good environmental factors and existing infrastructure that was left by the historical commercial beef SMEs. The major weakness is that SMEs do not have adequate access to capital and there are no adequate mechanisms for disease control. The sector boosts of massive opportunities for vertical integration and yawning gap for exports in meat and hides. The sector is heavily threatened by cheaper white meat options and disease incidence and consumers also have a low purchasing power. Based on this knowledge, the following sections expand on the significance of strategy evolution and the focus on business strategy, furthering our understanding of the phenomenon of strategy.

3.2.1 Focus of business strategy

The strategy of a company is its means to an end. It deals with the management conundrum of whether a company should concentrate on a single traditional line of business or develop a diverse range of business activities, both related and unrelated, whether to pursue competitive strategy based on low-cost leadership or product superiority, how to respond to changing consumer preferences, how to react to newly emerging

opportunities and threats, and how to support long-term growth of the enterprise (Erin Bass & Grgaard, 2021). A company's dedication to its goods, markets, competitive landscape, and ways of doing business is communicated through its strategy, which reflects managerial decisions made among available options (Ansoff, Kipley, Lewis, Helm-Stevens and Ansoff, 2018) After defining the function that strategy plays in accomplishing company goals, it is crucial to understand the focus of business strategy, which is briefly discussed in the next section.

Growth and profitability are the main reasons why strategies are formulated in business. Other minor reasons like customer satisfaction and outperforming competitors also form part of the reasons. This is achieved through the creation of competitive advantage over competitors that gives the firm an edge over such business opponents (Damilano *et al*., 2018). According to De Massis *et al*., (2015:1-3), the firms hold dissimilar and distinctive resources where upon their strategies are based and strategies become successful in leveraging the same resources through which competitive advantage is achieved. A strategically managed firm continuously scans the environment for possible new opportunities to exploit and to wedge against threats and minimise adverse effects (Schendel & Hitt, 2007:4). Strategic renewal enables suitable procedures where appropriate to withstand competitive advantage. It then becomes appropriate for the next section to look into the concept of strategic management and how it is useful in sustaining the firm's competitive advantage.

3.2.2 Strategic management

Strategic management, according to Ansoff *et al*. (2018:4), is a process that addresses the entrepreneurial activity of organizations, organizational renewal and growth, and in particular, the development and use of the strategy that underpins organizational operations. According to Nag et al. (2007:944), strategic management entails the primary intended and unexpected actions done by general managers on behalf of owners to improve the performance of their companies in their external settings (Müller & Kunisch, 2018:457–482). By defining strategic management as an art and science involving the formulation of plans for the effective and efficient management of external opportunities and threats while taking into account a firm's internal strengths and weaknesses, Meresa (2019:16) provided a broader perspective on the discipline. Utilizing resources is included in this effort to improve business success.

In a broader sense, strategic management gives the A2 beef SMEs the overarching directives through the formation of a strategic vision and mission, setting goals, developing strategies as a way to reach goals, putting strategies into action, monitoring, and evaluating results. It also helps in evaluating the efficacy,

efficiency, and relevance of plans and in taking corrective action as required. The beef SMEs should understand that strategic management is a continuous process with the goal of maintaining competitive advantage for the duration of the organization (Santiago, 2013:1 and Nasifoglu *et al.,* 2020:3295).The availability of valuable resources gives these firms sustainability impetus for survival. Gaining a competitive advantage is a continual process, therefore businesses must always have the necessary resources at their disposal to produce value (Naliaka & Namusonge, 2015:104). It then also becomes the mandate not only of the SMEs in their individual capacities, but the government and other stakeholders must weigh in with much needed support. The concept of identifying and selecting favourable market opportunities cannot be disregarded in strategic management as a means of exploiting valuable resources in ways that are too complex to mimic (Porter, 2015: 358-371). This can be accomplished by combining suitable synergistic combinations with entrepreneurship, and hence the next chapter will into the role of entrepreneurial skills among beef cattle SMEs.

3.3 Role of Entrepreneurial skill amongst beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe

The general agreement among academics is that entrepreneurship is all about seeing and seizing chances (Omer & Yemini, 2017:140). Opportunities exist when there are market imperfections, according to Alvarez *et al.* (2017:726). This hypothesis is consistent with the discovery and creation theories. Alvarez & Barney (2007:13) and Davidson, Per, & Tonelli, Marcello (2013:2) both agreed that businesspeople should examine their surroundings for opportunities to seize. (Minciu, Berar, & Dima 2019: 1142). The volatility brought on by ongoing changes in environmental elements including governmental policy, consumer behaviour, and other macroeconomic fundamentals creates those possibilities. The focus of the creation theory, according to Welter *et al.,* (2016:5), is based on the claim that opportunities are endogenously produced by entrepreneurial acts as they investigate potential for the production of new goods and services. Other researchers, such Welter *et al*. (2016) and Schendel and Hitt (2007), argue that opportunity also results from creativity and insight and inspires the development of innovations. Scot (2018:5) confirms efforts to forge a lasting competitive edge and generate wealth are aided by the examination of opportunities. According to George *et al*. (2016), the entrepreneurship concept aids in the opportunity, recognition, identification, and/or creation of wealth, so it makes sense to question the role of entrepreneurship in maintaining competitive advantage, which is discussed in the following section.

3.3.1 Scope of entrepreneurship

Whether opportunities are produced or discovered is still up for debate. However, there is general agreement among academics that the focus of entrepreneurship is on the originality and newness of new goods, processes, and markets as the drivers of wealth creation (Hilmersson, 2013). According to Ferreira & Coelho (2020:255), taking advantage of entrepreneurial chances helps businesses build the competitive advantage they need to make money. Some academics have advanced the idea that using resources strategically will help you gain a competitive advantage and generate riches (Mahdi & Nassar, 2021:9891). Therefore, strategic resource management produces a large number of valuable, distinctive, and difficult to duplicate resources before a company has enough time to become wealthy (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003:1313; Katkalo *et al*., 2010:1175). When a collection of resources may be easily imitated through resource management, businesses put up barriers to prevent being imitated by gaining intellectual property rights (Nebus, Chai & Subramanian, 2021:37). To be effective, entrepreneurship needs to be strengthened by a sustained competitive edge.

3.4 Sustainability of competitive advantage

In any competitive business environment where SMEs in general have a presence, much alone the beef cattle sector, sustainable competitive advantage is critical mass. Businesses can outperform rivals when they have a sustainable competitive advantage. It is crucial to remember that the entrepreneurial process, as previously described, is accountable for opportunity detection, discovery, identification, and/or creation (Yitshaki *et al*., 2021:1-31). To successfully achieve a permanent competitive advantage that can lead to the generation of wealth, a company must successfully foster continual opportunity seeking and advantage seeking behaviors (Abubaka, 2019:12).

Elijah and Millicent (2018:30) emphasize that it is crucial to remember that opportunity seeking and sustainable competitive advantage are essential for the firm to achieve superior performance to rivals. According to Tabares (2021:321), opportunity seeking is a characteristic of entrepreneurs that allows for the continuous search and creation of opportunities, whereas maintaining competitive advantage is the responsibility of strategic management that aids in the selection of opportunities that are likely to be exploited and the strategic management of resources. Considering the, some academics have suggested that the consolidation of knowledge about strategic entrepreneurship—a combination of entrepreneurship and strategic management—is essential to a deeper understanding of how wealth and performance are achieved in both new SMEs and large, established companies (Ireland et al., 2003a:966; Ireland & Webb, 2007b:59; Schendel & Hitt, 2007:1). The next section will elaborate on the distinctive characteristics of strategic

entrepreneurship, discussing in depth the junction of entrepreneurship and strategic management and their implications in maintaining a firm's competitive advantage, based on the thesis.

3.4.1 Intersection of entrepreneurship and strategic management

Although the disciplines of entrepreneurialism and strategic management have evolved independently over time, they nonetheless have a similar thread. They both concentrate on how businesses absorb environmental changes and take advantage of opportunities brought forth by uncertainties and discontinuities (Gifford, 2010; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009:7; Schindehutte & Morris, 2009:246; Shane, 2003:23). In support of this hypothesis, Yadav and Bansal (2020:133) argue that these uncertainties create opportunities, making it advantageous for the company to adopt an entrepreneurial mind set. According to Haseeb, Hussain, Lusarczyk, and Jermsittiparsert (2019:154), the business climate fundamentals continue to negatively affect the performance and productivity of SME enterprises, including those in the beef sector. In light of the aforementioned, Laszlo and Zhexembayeva (2017) suggested that organizations implement intervention strategies that make use of their current competitive advantage while also looking into the future. Exploring and taking advantage of possibilities are referred to as opportunity and advantage seeking behaviours, respectively, and Ketchen at al. (2007:373) claims that the result of their combination is wealth generation. The diagram below, figure 3.1 illustrates the intersection of entrepreneurship and strategic management to cause wealth creation in A2 beef cattle SMEs

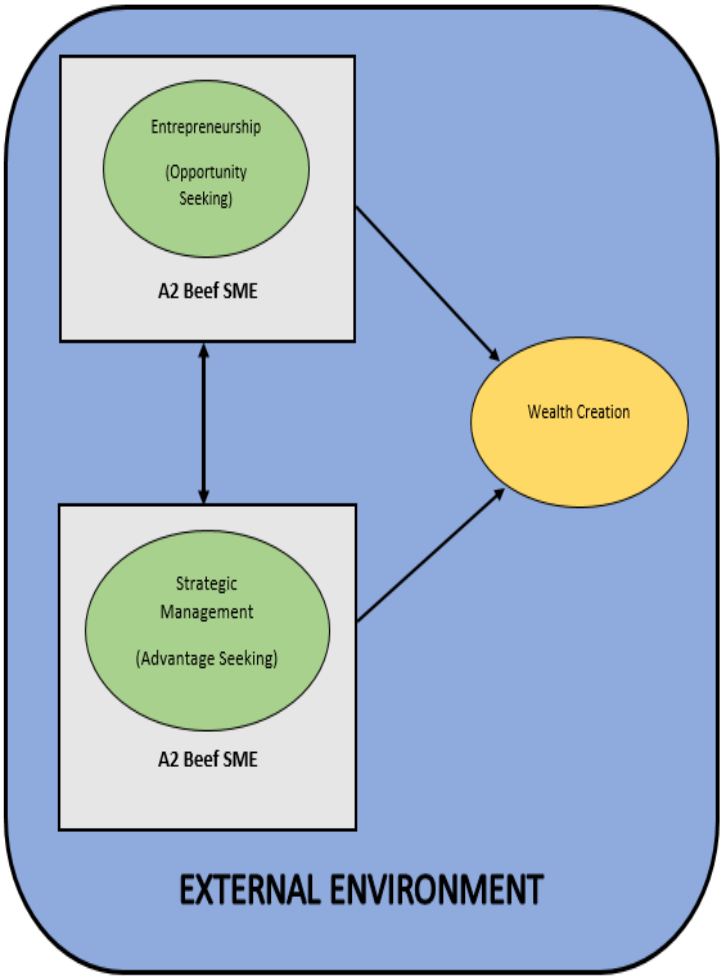

Figure 3.1: Entrepreneurship and strategic management nexus.

In turbulent conditions, businesses have the capacity to spot, unearth, or even create opportunities. The ones that use an entrepreneurial mind set to understand and give context to an uncertain situation become opportunities (Mauer *et al*., 2017:293). Only when opportunities are continuously exploited in conjunction with the processes of opportunity identification, discovery, and/or development do they result in a lasting competitive advantage. The idea of entrepreneurship is connected to the process of creating or identifying opportunities (Lundberg, 2018:4; Shane, 2003:4). Utilizing opportunities that have been discovered and generated, durable competitive advantages are attained through the strategic management of resources (Mahdi & Nassar, 2021:9891). From this perspective, some academics have argued that entrepreneurship and strategic management have a shared border, and in this situation, they cannot be separated if a corporation is to attain superior performance and generate wealth (Planko *et al.*, 2017:614). (Ketchen et al., 2007:371; Ireland et al., 2003a:967). Nevo *et al.* (2015:643) paid attention to how managers play a crucial

part in a company's performance because of their capacity to recognize and combine resources that a company owns or controls in a profitable way.

Entrepreneurial actions are then concentrated on developing new ventures, even though entrepreneurship involves the identification and/or development of opportunities (Ireland, 2007:9; Shane, 2003:4; Shane & Vankataraman, 2000:211). Strategic management gives a company a clear understanding of its goals, plans for how it will get there, and the tactics it will use to achieve those goals (Tapera, 2014:2).The relationship between entrepreneurship and strategic management as well as the factors that contribute to wealth development is shown in figure 3.2 below.

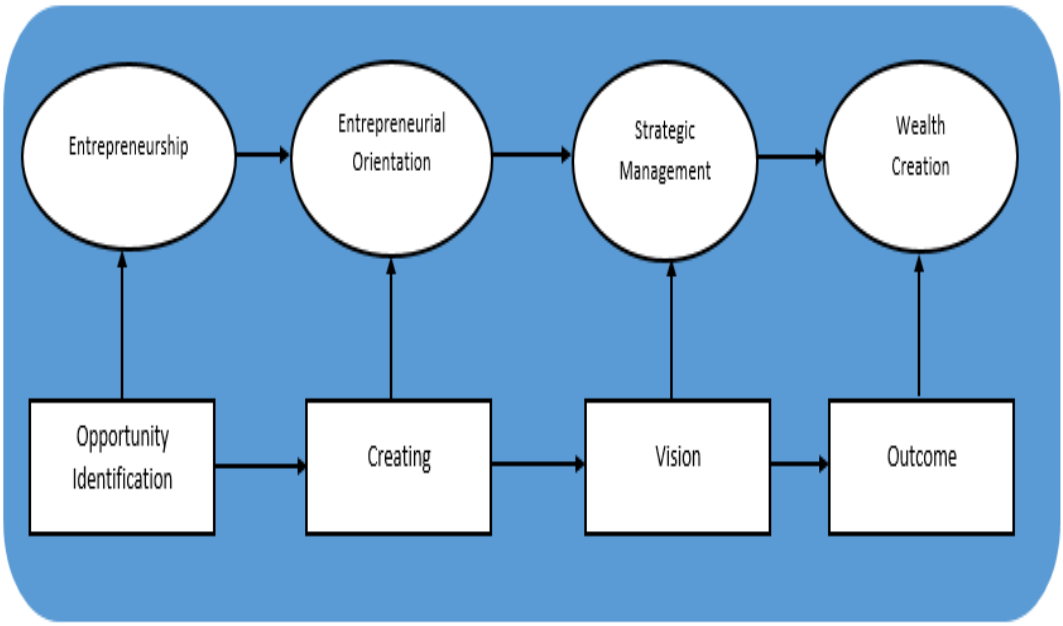

Figure 3.2: Strategic management and entrepreneurship disciplines linkages.

When a company has a solid strategy in place, all its employees are fully aware of the goals that the company has set for itself as well as the part they must play in achieving those goals (Ginter, Duncan & Swayne, 2018.). The plan must be in line with ongoing environmental scanning and, when necessary, strategic renewal. A firm's sustainable competitive advantage, which is essential for a sustainable firm's performance and wealth generation, has been singled out for strategic management to give it greater weight (Mahdi, 2015:167: Barney & Arikan, 2005:124: Ketchen et al., 2007:371).

Both strategic management and entrepreneurship are adaptable practices that can operate either proactively or reactively in response to environmental changes in order to improve business performance and wealth

development (Kumkale, 2022: 37). The goals of entrepreneurship are to build wealth and look for chances that can give businesses a competitive edge through the development of new goods, services, methods of production or management, or market innovations (Shane, 2003:4; Shane & Vankataraman, 2000:211). A2 beef cattle companies must create and take use of competitive advantages in their surroundings as part of strategic management (Hosseini *et al*., 2018:17). In tandem with this school of thought, Hess *et al.* (2016) contend that entrepreneurial actions are based on strategic management, which calls for the best options to be chosen from a pool of available options. Entrepreneurial opportunities are a major source of options to be pursued. Academic experts in the areas of entrepreneurship and strategy have expressed worry over such claims, and there have been arguments that entrepreneurship and strategic management are complimentary academic disciplines (Kim, 2018:180.). Given the foregoing, it is imperative to increase understanding of the relationship between entrepreneurship and strategic management; as a result, the notion of strategic entrepreneurship is examined in the next section.

3.5 Concept of strategic entrepreneurship

Nnabugwu claims that strategic entrepreneurship is a developing topic of study that combines advantage-seeking and opportunity-seeking behaviors to improve business performance and wealth generation (Ireland *et al.,* 2003a:963; Ketchen *et al*., 2007:371; Utoyo, Fontana and Satrya, 2020). Strategic entrepreneurship is described as entrepreneurial acts with a strategic viewpoint that develop around the combination of entrepreneurship and strategic management by Hitt et al. (2001:480), Ireland et al. (2003a:966), and Masango (2020:1083). Although it is widely acknowledged that strategic entrepreneurship is a by-product of both strategic management and entrepreneurship, it is still unclear whether this integration is the cause of strategic entrepreneurship (Morris et al., 2008:194; Ireland *et al.,* 2001:49; Ireland *et al*., 2003a:966; Hitt *et al.,* 2001:481; Shi, Li, and Chumnumpan, 2020; Meyer *et al*., 2016).

Notwithstanding the diverse theories regarding the terminology relevant to amalgamate strategic management and entrepreneurship to create strategic entrepreneurship, there is a consensus by scholars that strategic entrepreneurship is relevant for all firms in making optimum use of their skills base and other resources at their disposal to ensure competitiveness and mileage ahead of rivals thereby creating better value for customers (Ireland & Webb, 2007b:50; Bengesi, 2013:40). This aspect is particularly critical mass also to SME beef cattle in Africa who face stiff competition from their counterparts in well-developed parts of the world. Undoubtedly, finding and taking advantage of new chances will help maintain competitive edge (Gran, 2021:44). This occurs when businesses benefit from synergies between efficient opportunity finding

and efficient advantage seeking (Zhang, O'Kane, and Chen, 2020:254). This has the implication that SMEs must take advantage of current competitive advantages while maintaining a long-term view of business sustainability (Ireland & Webb, 2007b:50: Mahdi *et al.,* 2019:320).

Merton, (2020: 3) argued that an opportunity is the gap unutilised in the market by the firms already in existence. A2 beef cattle SME firms need to be scouting for such gaps to exploit as they promptly take moves to seize such opportunities, invoking the first mover advantage. Tyre (2018:2) highlight that first mover advantage is affiliated to pro activeness through breaking the ice in introducing new products/services to the market or engineering new products/services that never existed before. Innovation and risk-taking behaviour become inevitable. It is expected that beef SMEs should be more active in the aspects of innovation and risk taking considering their small sizes and that most of them are owner managed and hence there is minimum bureaucracy in decision making. A firm is regarded as being entrepreneurial depending on how high its appetite to take risks, being proactive and being innovative is (Gupta, 2018:1401-1411).

The A2 beef cattle SMEs can improve their competitiveness by enhancing their competitive orientation (Borocki, 2019:265). This can be done through involving the additional dimensions like competitiveness, autonomy, risk-taking decision making, innovativeness and pro activeness (Dai, *et al.,* 2014:511-524). Dess and Lumpkin (2005:147) and Ljungkvist & Samuelsson, (2019:18) emphasise that entrepreneurial orientation has often been applied in corridors of corporate entrepreneurship and hence the concept's appreciation becomes imperative in both well-established and upcoming SME ventures (Mc Loughlin, Lewis, Lascelles & Nudurupati, 2021:1).

Ireland *et al*., (2003a:966) and Adomako *et al.* (2018:453) concur that SMEs and new ventures sniff opportunities faster and much better than their large scale and more established counterparts. The endurance of the competitive edge required to take advantage of those possibilities over time is SMEs and new ventures' shortcoming. In contrast, established and large companies value this strength. Established businesses actually possess a considerably stronger skill set that allows them to create and maintain a competitive edge, but they are found to lack the ability to recognize and seize entrepreneurial chances that their abundant resources should enable them to do so. The resource-based view promotes the ownership and strategic management by the business of resources that are uncommon, unique, and non-replaceable (Gaya, 2016; Katkalo et al., 2010:1175), resulting in the firm's sustainable economic development (Ireland *et al.,* 2003a:967). Scholars agree, it should be mentioned, that strategic entrepreneurship is appropriate for a firm to use to boost profitability and sustainability in both small and large established firms (Schindehutte &

Morris, 2000:242: Hughes *et al.*, 2021:202). The argument over whether construct is best for SMEs in A2 beef cattle SMEs is still very much open. Ireland et al. (2003a:967) created the paradigm of strategic entrepreneurship that is shown below based on this discussion. The approach is thought to be suitable for both small and large businesses in any industry.

3.5.1 Strategic entrepreneurship model

The need to develop appropriate response mechanisms to sustain competitive advantage and improve productivity and profitability for both small and large firms has been caused by the tenaciously volatile environment, competitive pressure, and serious resource depletion plaguing the current business field. Based on this, Ireland et al. created the dynamic model of strategic entrepreneurship (2003a:967). The approach incorporates perspectives from the firm's resource-based vision, human capital, social capital, organizational learning, and creative recognition (Monsen & Boss, 2009:74). It identified four factors that can help a company build a competitive edge that results in wealth generation. These characteristics include an entrepreneurial attitude, an entrepreneurial culture, and an entrepreneurial leadership style. They also include strategically allocating resources, using creativity, and fostering innovation.
(Figure 3.3).

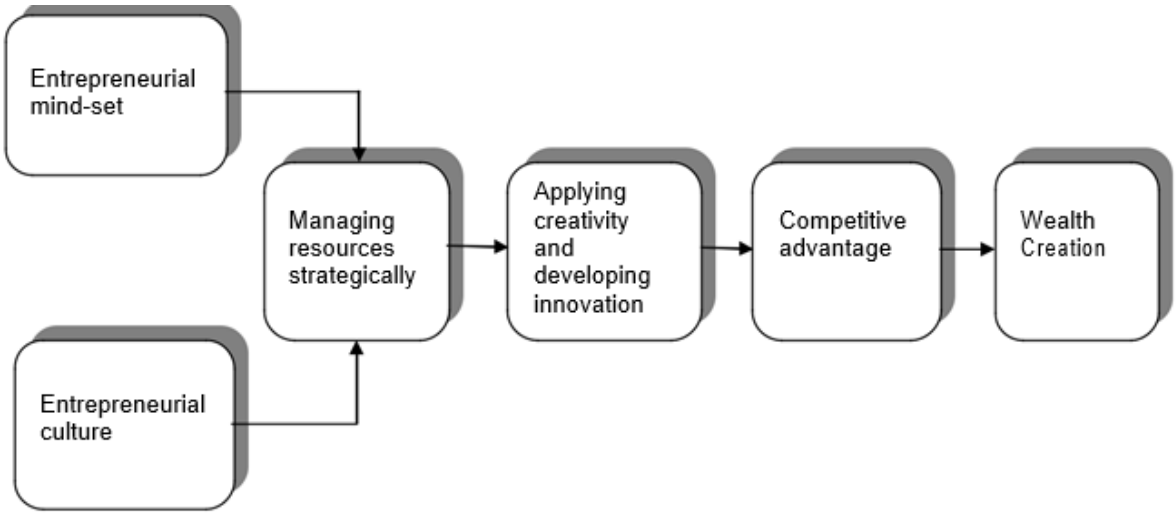

Figure 3.3: A model of strategic entrepreneurship

Source: Ireland *et al* (2003a:967)

The model uses a firm as its fundamental analytical unit. To achieve the greatest amount of wealth development, it is assumed that opportunity seeking and advantage seeking behaviours must occur together (Ireland et al., 2003a:966). Entrepreneurial response actions, such as the creation of new markets, the

acquisition of new clients, and the development of novel resource combinations, are the foundation of a company's ability to recognize new opportunities.

The behaviour of pursuing advantages is more strategically oriented and is responsible for choosing tactics to maintain a competitive advantage (Hughes *et al.,* 2021:202-227; Ireland *et al.,* 2001:50;). Schindehutte and Morris (2009: 242) and Fardous, *et al.* (2021: 323–339) suggest that the behaviours of opportunity seeking and advantage seeking are complementary, and that the two can work together effectively through the strategic management of resources that results from the use of entrepreneurial mindset, entrepreneurial culture, and entrepreneurial leadership, notwithstanding a fascinating argument that strategic entrepreneurship is appropriate for the firms operating in a dynamic and competitive environment. Considering this, the following section briefly highlights the applicability of the strategic entrepreneurship framework in A2 beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe.

3.5.2 Relevance of strategic entrepreneurship in beef SMEs

Previously, the majority of scholars studying strategic entrepreneurship have concentrated on corporate entrepreneurship, presuming that large corporations are more likely than small businesses to engage in strategic entrepreneurship (Kuratko, 2007:157; Morris et al., 2008:88: Umrani *et al*., 2018). Beef and other SMEs struggle with management and other resources, which is one of the reasons they are excluded from strategic entrepreneurship (Lamine et al., 2021:309; Nieto & Santamaria, 2010:45; Bushe, 2019:1). Resources are required to properly pursue entrepreneurial methods such as entrepreneurial orientation (Boohene, 2018:1). Entrepreneurial businesses must invest significant resources to high-risk ventures, novel technology, and the introduction of unproven goods or services to the market (Linton, 2019:2). Other scholars have concurred with this approach, which holds that a company's competitive qualities are a result of its ability to identify and seize entrepreneurial possibilities (Ireland et al., 2009:35; Lamine *et al*., 2021:309). Because of their limited resources, small businesses may not be able to incorporate entrepreneurial opportunity seeking and advantage seeking behaviour that results in novel, prized, and exclusive business innovations.

In highly competitive business contexts, businesses encounter the same environmental harshness regardless of their size. To acquire a sustained competitive edge, businesses must struggle to put entrepreneurial strategies into practice (Peskett, 2018:1). According to Rachinger (2018:3), a corporation must learn how to take advantage of current opportunities while also looking into new ones in order to succeed in a turbulent market. Given that the intersection of strategic management and entrepreneurship

results in entrepreneurial opportunity seeking and advantage seeking behaviours designed to provide greater value creation while at the same time reducing the competitive threats, the emergence of the strategic entrepreneurship phenomenon addresses this bottleneck (Hitt et al., 2001:50). Ansoff, Kipley, Lewis, Helm-Stevens, and Ansoff (2018) define strategic entrepreneurship as a careful and supported desire to respond to environmental changes. This concept is applicable to all company categories, including small, established, and corporate entrepreneurship. New businesses and established companies need to be both entrepreneurial and strategic, according to Hitt *et al.* (2001:488) and Oviatt & McDougall (2018:31-57). This is because small and large businesses that have learned to combine both strategic and entrepreneurial skills are well-positioned to survive and increase productivity and sustainability while also creating wealth in a volatile and competitive environment (Ketchen *et al*., 2007:371; Adebisi, S.A., 2019).

Strategic entrepreneurship, which adopts a dynamic capability perspective, offers guidance for the interaction between competitive strategies and resource allocation. Here, resources are acquired and built into coveted, valuable designs in order to address rapidly changing surroundings (Helfat *et al.,* 2007:2). Bachmann (2002:64) asserts that competitive strategy continues to be the cornerstone for understanding rivalry, competitiveness, and industry dynamics, all of which are crucial for both small and large businesses. Entrepreneurial action needs to be strategic to ensure higher and sustainable productivity, keep competitors away from its successful business model, and speed the firm toward its goals in order for it to perform better (Kutatko & Audretsch, 2009:5).

3.5.3 Theoretical conceptual components of strategic entrepreneurship

Strategic management and entrepreneurship literature is the source of many of the conceptual elements used in strategic entrepreneurship (Schröder *et al*., 2020:22; Tang *et al.,* 2008:219; Ireland *et al.,* 2001:49; Ireland & Webb, 2007b:51). They have been conceptualized and empirically studied here. Being a young and developing topic, strategic entrepreneurship has yet to build a robust and empirically supported paradigm (Ireland 2007:9; Schindehutte & Morris, 2009:241: Demil *et al*., 2015:1-11.). Wealth creation and performance are the outcome variables in a widely recognized theoretical model of strategic entrepreneurship. However, the empirical research on conceptualized causal linkages is scarce (Yu, Lumpkin, Sorenson & Brigham, 2012:33-57: 2, 13; Ireland *et al*., 2003a:963; Ireland *et al*., 2009:20; Ireland & Webb, 2007b:58; Ketchen *et al*., 2007:371; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009:5). As a result, recent research suggested that in order to better understand strategic entrepreneurship, strategic academics must be imaginative and creative in the constructions they choose (Ireland, 2007:9; Monsen & Boss, 2009:74: Dangelico, Pujari & Pontrandolfo,

2017:490). The following section discusses the historical precedents of strategic entrepreneurship in light of the aforementioned background.

3.5.4 Entrepreneurial orientation as antecedent of Strategic Entrepreneurship

The beef A2 Monsen and Boss (2009:74) and Gunawan, Jacob, and Duysters (2016:575) utilized entrepreneurial orientation as an antecedent of strategic entrepreneurship since SMEs must act entrepreneurially, being inventive, risk-taking, and proactive. Covin and Slevin claim that (1991:8). Both strategic entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial orientation having a direct link with organisational behaviour as depicted in Figure 3.4 below.

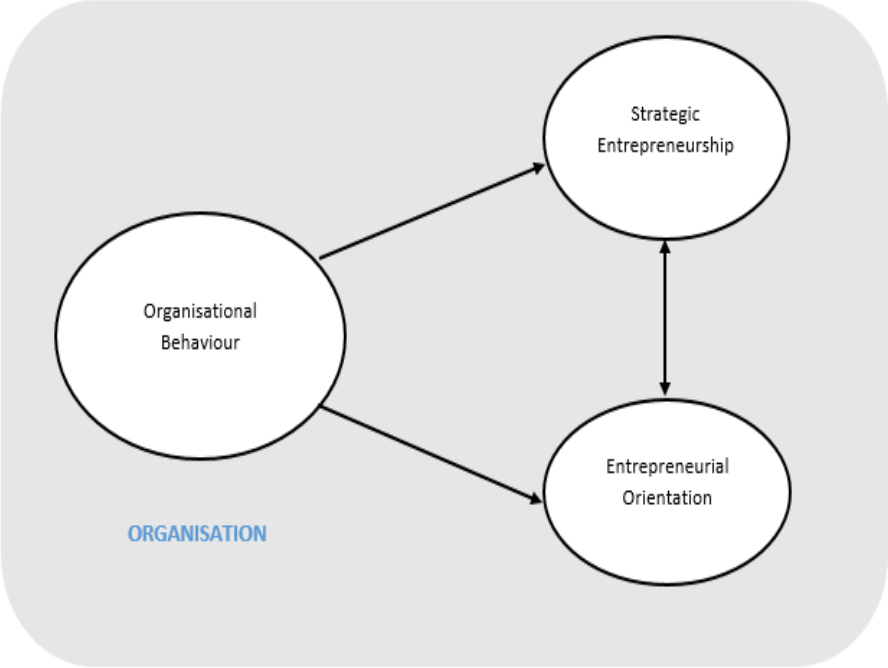

Figure 3.4: Organisational behaviour

3.5.5 Dimensions of strategic entrepreneurial orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation constitutes of three dimensions which are innovation, risk taking and pro-activeness (Linton, 2019:2). Further clarification on this was done by Rahman, 2016:3) by adding competitive aggressiveness and autonomy. According to Ireland *et al.* (2003b) and Mier, & Kohli, (2021:194) perpetual leveraging entrepreneurial opportunities demands firms to purposefully ratify entrepreneurial orientation, a concept underpinned by innovation, risk taking and pro activeness as illustrated in figure 3.5 below.

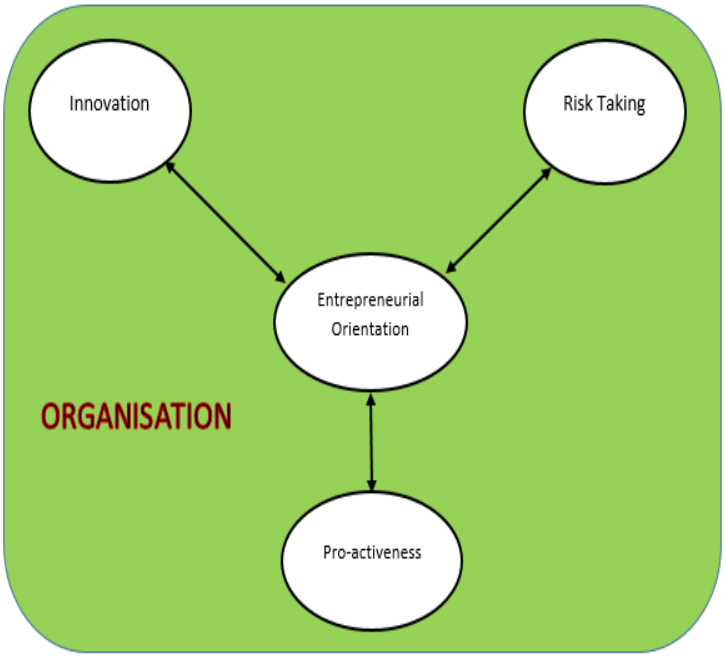

Figure 3.5: Dimensions of strategic entrepreneurial orientation

The foundation of entrepreneurial orientation is the critical significance that opportunity identification and subsequent exploitation play. A2 beef SMEs should embrace innovation, risk-taking, and pro activeness in their microenvironments to strengthen the entrepreneurial orientation perspective shown in the picture above. According to Rua (2017:4), a company only exhibits an entrepreneurial orientation and culture when it engages in innovative, risk-taking, and pro-active business practices. Shwairef *et al.* (2012) conceptualise "strategic posture" based on this stance as a firm's competitive orientation. According to Basheer *et al.* (2021:317), concurring with Ireland et al. (2003a:967), opined that the application of creativity and the development of innovation lead to sustainability of organisations leading to wealth creation. That notion is linked with the elements of entrepreneurial orientation namely: risk taking, innovativeness, and pro-activeness (Ireland et al., 2003a:983) According to Martnez-Vergara and Valls-Pasola (2020:17), and hence disruptive innovation actively control their competitive future giving them the benefit from first mover advantage.

Martínez-Vergara and Valls-Pasola, (2020:17) and Monsen and Boss (2009:75), opined that there is too much risk in introducing a new product or service in the market to compete with existing goods with the established organised whose reputation is intact. Based on this viewpoint, Martínez-Vergara and Valls-Pasola, (2020) suggested that the line of thinking of applying creativity and developing innovation in the

model of strategic entrepreneurship by Ireland *et al.* (2003b) should include risk taking, pro-activeness, autonomy, and competitive aggressiveness.

3.5.6 Limitation of the Previous Studies on Strategic Entrepreneurship

The strategic entrepreneurship discourse has not yet developed its formal constructs so far. In order to improve the causation effect link and enable a separation of ideologies that are most suitable to strategic entrepreneurship, scholars have offered theories of preference for empirical test (Saleh *et al.,* 2017:347). Despite past efforts to establish this new field, conceptualization obstacles still exist (Grover *et al.,* 2018:388). Given the foregoing, the next sections highlight the shortcomings of earlier research on strategic entrepreneurship.

3.5.7 Conceptual gaps of strategic entrepreneurship

In dynamic and competitive environment, beef cattle SME firms require strategic entrepreneurial aptitude to survive and increase productivity sustainably. This is more so given the competitiveness of the business landscape buoyed by aspects like customer needs, technological opportunities, and competitor activities, which are constantly changing and less predictable (Dyduch *et al.,* 2021:44; Cooper *et al.,* 2000:121; Teece, 2007:1322). Firms with a sharp appetite for growth need to adopt a new growth and sustainability strategy that is flexible, fast and innovative with orientation towards timeous identification and subsequent exploitation of up-coming opportunities created by discontinuities as a result of environmental change (Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009:7). According to literature, SMEs should pursue a strategy that continuously examines and takes advantage of opportunities while maintaining competitive advantage for the long term (Ireland & Webb, 2007b:50; Khouroh *et al.,* 2020:709). Therefore, it is generally acknowledged that strategic entrepreneurship helps businesses in their efforts to rely on increased productivity as a route to superior performance, both now and in the future (Ireland & Webb, 2007b:55; Ireland & Webb, 2009:469; Ketchen et al., 2007:371: Teece, 2019:23).

Despite the fierce arguments made by proponents of strategic entrepreneurship, who very much support the maintenance of competitive advantage through the incorporation of opportunity seeking and advantage seeking behaviours as the prescription to boost productivity and enhance performance. Studies lately have exposed some gaps relating to conceptualisation. There are concerns as to whether the strategic entrepreneurship discourse is a sub field of entrepreneurship, strategic management, or corporate entrepreneurship, or an independent line of study (Schindehutte & Morris, 2009:242: Castriotta, *et al*., 2021:.2821). Strategic entrepreneurship is beyond being just an interface of entrepreneurship and strategy

and arguments are that their marriage is still a debatable issue (Schindehutte & Morris, 2009:242). Such a school of thinking has helped create new avenues for future study and the testing of other hypotheses that can shed more light on the causal-effect link in this discourse of strategic entrepreneurship.

3.5.7 Marginal position of Beef SMEs in strategic entrepreneurship

Both small and large firms bear the brunt of environmental harshness that requires strategic entrepreneurial response to ensure sustainability and increased productivity and profitability (Peltier, Celestine & Boncana, 2022:19-38). Due to their limited resources, beef cattle SMEs are more susceptible than large and corporate enterprises to be badly influenced by external environmental factors (Bendell, 2022:1). For academics to fully understand the responsive mechanism that develops the competitive skills of beef cattle SMEs, such a little response is essential. A theoretical model of strategic entrepreneurship was put forth by Ireland et al. (2003a:967) to help both SME and large businesses in general create lasting competitive advantage. If the offered hypotheses are adequate to enhance sustained competitive advantage to encompass SMEs in general, let alone those in agriculture, the proposed theoretical conceptual model of strategic entrepreneurship is still under harsh criticism. Due to the current deadlock, further research is necessary to determine the most pertinent strategic entrepreneurship concepts that will address problems affecting both SMEs and large businesses (Kristiansen, 2020; Morris et al., 2008:88).

3.6 Theories underpinning competitive advantage

To explain the origins of a firm's competitive advantage and the variance in performance between firms, a number of theories can be utilized. In this study, four theories—networking theory, organizational learning theory, resource-based view, and dynamic capacity view—are closely examined. These theories, which are depicted in Figure 3.7 below, are evaluated in order to explain the source of competitive advantage and the persistent performance gap between firms because they are highly relevant to the goals of this study.

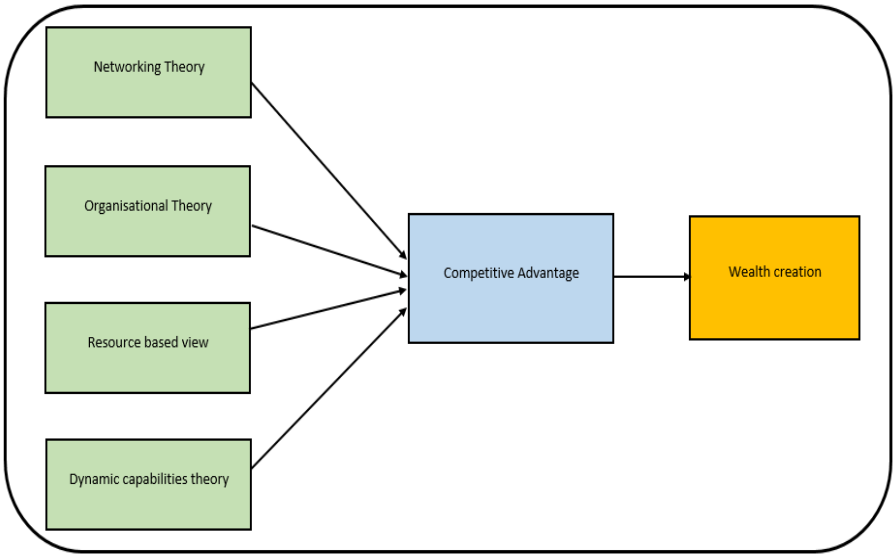

Figure 3.7: Theories behind competitive advantage

In the figure 3.7 above, the networking theory, organisational theory, resource based theory and the dynamic capabilities theory are synergised to offer competitive advantage enroute to wealth creation. The following sections will hence nurrow down to the contribution of each theory to beef cattle SMEs sustainability.

3.6.1 Networking Theory

Networking is the mutually beneficial connection and understanding to create enduring relationships involving businesses with clients, suppliers, and rivals, among others. It frequently crosses barriers of industry, place, politics, and culture (Simba and Thai, 2019:347). In volatile and highly competitive environment where there is great uncertainty. Networking helps firms to share the risk in such volatile environment and mitigate against such adverse effects. This is more so for SME firms in the primary industry, most of whom will still be trying to find their feet in the business arena. According to the literature, networking has benefits that include quicker market entry, market growth, product development, and obtaining resources for survival like easier and faster access to information, technologies, and competitive knowledge that boost innovative capability (Dickson & Weaver, 2011:126; Welter & Small bone, 2011:112; Nieto & Santamaria, 2010:47; Semrau & Werner, 2012:159). In light of the aforementioned, networking theory describes the connections and affiliations a firm has with stakeholders and other businesses, as well as how these connections and affiliations affect a corporation's behaviour and competitive advantages. For SMEs like the ones in this study, networking is crucial from a strategic perspective. This is especially true because they frequently have resource limits

(Kropp & Zolin, 2005:1; Nieto Santamaria, 2010:45; Verhees & Meulenberg, 2004:137; Oparaocha, 2015:861).

Academic debate suggests that both internal and external social capital may be advantageous for market-oriented organisations aiming to gather, disseminate, and use market knowledge to achieve firm success (Ben *et al*., 2021:1177). In like with the aforementioned reasoning, a beef SME firm obtains market intelligence through learning about customers' present and future demands, exogenous external factors that may affect those wants, and competitive action that maintains competitive advantage (Sudhir and Unnithan,, 2019:631).

3.6.2 Organisational Learning Theory

Organizational learning theory describes how a company builds its knowledge base over time and uses its knowledge reservoir to achieve performance, which leads to the creation of wealth (Ketchen *et al.,* 2007:379; Nuo-Solins, 2017). Two categories of firm knowledge are identified in the literature: explicit (articulable) and tacit (unarticulated) (Nonaka & Krogh, 2009:635; Ryan & Connor, 2019:31). Both explicit and tacit knowledge are relevant to the behaviours of advantage seeking and opportunity seeking (Lane & Lubatkin, 1998:462). Considering this, organisational learning is a strategic entrepreneurial pillar that connects actions aimed at maximizing productivity, performance, and wealth generation (Ketchen *et al.,* 2007:371; Ireland et al., 2003a:967; Ireland & Webb, 2009:469; Scharunge & Puth, 2020). According to Ireland et al. (2001:57), there are four steps to the learning process: information gathering, distribution, sharing and interpretation, and organizational memory/storage. As a result, market orientation offers a solid foundation for learning because it addresses all four stages of the learning process (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990:3).

It's essential for SMEs in the beef cattle industry to acquire new skills to improve a company's capacity to grow productively and endure pressure from both competitors and the environment. Hitt and co. (2001:483; Porter,and Kramer, 2019:323-346). Efficient and effective information transfer within the cattle industry. The primary feature of strategic entrepreneurship is the ability to quickly make decisions in the face of ongoing environmental change and the need to ramp up production. By doing so, SME firms are better equipped to withstand environmental constraints and maintain a competitive edge (Ireland & Webb, 2007b:50). But for SMEs, maintaining a competitive advantage necessitates the integration of information, which is much beyond their capacity in terms of available expertise and other pertinent resources, downplaying their potential to maintain a competitive edge and boost output. The claim helps to explain why small businesses are adept at seizing opportunities but not at maintaining competitive advantages.

Nieto and Santamaria (2010:61) argued resources and competencies can be helpful in networking in facilitating networking within small firms, helping to close the gap closing the gap between small and large enterprises. According to Dickson and Weaver (2011:126), networking can supplement resource requirements by fostering learning and sharing among partner firms to develop the opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviours required for strategic entrepreneurship. The resource-based view, which explains how resources are determinant of a different firm's performance, is presented in the following section in relation to the theory of resources and its significance to competitive capabilities.

3.6.3 Resource Based View

The resource-based view dominates theory in the strategic management circles (Barney & Arikan, 2005:124; Whitfield, 2019: 324), and of late in entrepreneurial research (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001). The resource-based view's applicability to beef cattle SMEs is that certain assets and capabilities within these beef cattle SMEs must anchor the organisations competitive advantage and hence provide critical mass for material organisational performance and consequent wealth creation (Barney, 1991:105; Donnellan & Rutledge, (2019:728-737). Resource based view helps to identify and explain perpetual performance differences among firms. Barney (2001:54) and Prieto-Sandoval *et al*., 2019:1473) alluded that resources are intangible and tangible assets firms use for strategy identification and implementation. Resources that give an edge over competitors include those that are hard to come by, precious, inimitable and irreplaceable (Ireland, 2007:7; Barney, 1991:105; Katkalo *et al.,* 2010:1175). In addition to intellectual property (patents/copyrights), brands, reputations, process expertise, customer linkages and relationships, and strengths in knowledge management and skills within the staff complement that contribute to competitive advantage, Katkalo *et al*. (2010:1176) are part of the numerous strategic resources.

Despite the validity of this theory and its long history of use in academic research on strategic management and entrepreneurship, the resource-based view is insufficient to explain performance differences between enterprises. This hypothesis is excessively rigid and cannot keep up with the dynamically changing world (Teece, 2007:1344). Considering the aforementioned, the dynamic capacities hypothesis, which seems more pertinent to explain variations in performance among beef SME enterprises in a competitive and dynamic economy, is analytically reviewed in the next section.

3.6.4 Dynamic Capabilities Theory

How firms attain differences in performance standards in dynamic and volatile environments can be explained by the dynamic capability theory. Teece (2007:13220) argues that in volatile environment characterised by

changes in technological advancement, customer needs, opportunities and threats and actions of competitors' needs unique and inimitable dynamic capabilities. This theory advocates for that superiority in performance by a firm spring from its capability to shift its resources to align with the changes in the environment (Helfat *et al.,* 2007:4; Katkalo *et al.,* 2010:1177). Considering this, superior performance of a beef cattle SME firm is enhanced by its ability and capability to create hordes of resources that align to given context and hence its flexibility and capability to realign the combinations of these to keep pace with environmental changes and superimpose the superior performance of the firm. The ability to integrate, develop, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address a quickly changing environment must be one of the beef cattle SME firm's dynamic skills. Beef SMEs must thrive to systematically create and alters operational routines to improve performance (Kurtmollaiev, 2020:3-16). Beef SMEs can utilize their dynamic skills to quickly and effectively adjust to rapidly changing business contexts, resulting in operational efficiency and effectiveness. (Zhou *et al.,* 2020:114; Teece *et al.,* 1997:516). The ability of the beef A2 SMEs to read opportunities presented by the external environment beef SMEs depends on how adaptable the business to its supporting environment.

The theories that explain the sources of a firm's competitive advantage and the enduring performance differences between firms are the networking theory, learning theory, resource-based view, and dynamic capability. Sustainable competitive advantage requires businesses to own or control unique dynamic capabilities or resources (Katkalo *et al*., 2010:11755). The emphasis of learning theories is on the continuous creation of new information and the use of that knowledge as a source of competitive advantage. According to networking theory, businesses with limited resources can increase their capacities by networking even in the absence of additional resources, resulting in increased operational effectiveness and a competitive edge. They are then able to overcome obstacles posed by the changing environment (Bradford *et al.*, 2019:140-158).

3.7 Bridging opportunity and advantage seeking behaviours with Market orientation.

An opportunity seeking and advantage seeking behaviours are building blocks of the strategic entrepreneurship (Hughes *et al*., 2021:202-227). Augmented by the role of market information in opportunity identification give an indication that these three concepts are inter-linked. The figure 3.8 below illustrates this link.

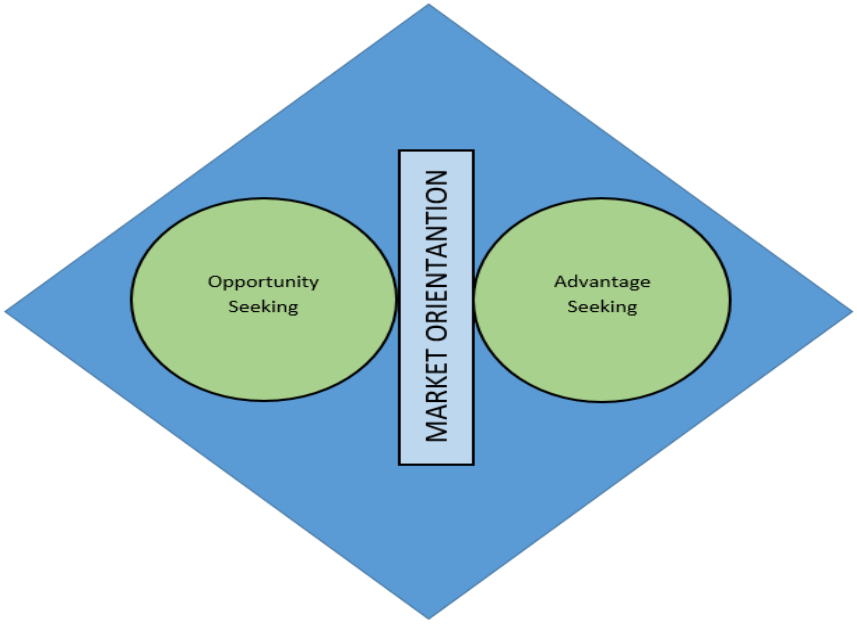

Figure 3.8: Opportunity and Advantage seeking behaviours

An opportunity is as a gap left in the market by those currently operating it (McNamara *et al.,* 2022: 22). With the same appreciation, opportunity seeking also involves seeking and generating market intelligence regarding products and or services offered in the market, behaviours of competitors, technological fundamentals, and other environmental factors that may impact on current and future needs of customers (He & Harris, 2020:176-182: Ireland *et al*., 2009:28; Shane, 2003:23). The focus is to identify the gap left by current players in the market. This information leads to opportunity identification, and it is crucial to the next stage of advantage-seeking that involves exploitation of opportunity. Market intelligence is critically important for both stages of opportunity seeking and advantage seeking. For a firm to sustain competitive advantage, it must focus on market gaps left in the market to address the undressed customer needs by offering new products and services or in a different way from competitors. Beef cattle SMEs have such leverage as they are quick to adapt.

Drawing from the above arguments, farmers should think beyond entrepreneurial orientation and analyse the antecedents of the strategic entrepreneurship. The focus then becomes to identify the hypotheses that contribute simultaneously to opportunity seeking and advantage seeking behaviours. While entrepreneurial orientation fosters opportunity seeking behaviour, it is unable to sustain competitive advantage. According to Morris *et al.* (2008:197) and Homburg *et al*.(2017:377-401), the applicability of entrepreneurial mind set to the firm's core strategy involves addressing aspects of where the open gaps are envisages.

Enhancing competitive advantage through inter-functional harmony, marketing orientation, and customer orientation (Chikerema & Makanyeza, 2021:6-19). The company can outsmart rivals and afford superior and unique products and services in the long run. This would suggest that market orientation produces market information that facilitates the discovery of opportunities and the development of new goods and/or services. Strong entrepreneurial orientation has stronger alignment to a response to the pursuit of opportunities through innovation (Wales *et al*., 2020:640).

3.7.1 Filling the conceptual gap of strategic entrepreneurship

The following sections are intended to close the conceptual gap by putting forward pertinent variables considered appropriate for strategic entrepreneurship that are relevant to both small and large firms. This conceptual gap results from the limitations of historical studies on strategic entrepreneurship and the theories behind competitive advantage. While acknowledging the efforts made by earlier studies to thoroughly explore this idea, this study suggests that those earlier studies undervalued the importance of entrepreneurial orientation, collaborations, knowledge management, and business ethics—all factors that this study deemed essential for strategic entrepreneurship in beef cattle SME firms in terms of rising production, rising profits, and sustainability. The researcher views these elements as essential to the model although they have not been formally incorporated in the strategic entrepreneurial model. All four ideas are very well suited to describing how businesses strategically boost efficiency and profitability to strengthen a long-term competitive edge. The next sections provide explanations on how each of these theories might be useful in filling in the conceptual gap of the strategic entrepreneurship in beef cattle SMEs, which serves as the conceptual framework of this study, taking submissions of this argument into consideration.

3.8.0 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual entrepreneurial framework components that served as the conceptual framework of the study are entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management, collaborations, and business ethics are the elements that have been identified. It explores the potential role of control factors in the relationship between strategic entrepreneurial response characteristics and SME performance, gives the conceptual framework for the study, and considers how the study might add to the body of knowledge on strategic entrepreneurship. The relationship between each concept and the performance of SME beef cattle is covered in further detail.

3.8.1 Strategic entrepreneurial response of A2 beef cattle SMEs

The prevalence of dynamic and competitive environments pressurises organisations operating in this environment. Organisations are hence compelled to align with this reality in a move to address the production

and sustainability bottle necks. Strategic entrepreneurship has emerged as an appropriate strategic tool in which firms simultaneously practice opportunity and advantage seeking behaviour and advantage seeking actions that help in obtaining above average performance and wealth creation (Utoyo *et al*., 2020:205). Opportunity seeking action is an action intended to locate and seize business possibilities, whereas advantage seeking action is a component of strategic management intended to maintain competitive advantage, as argued by Grayson and Hodges (2017:44). Under this umbrella, the nexus of entrepreneurship and strategic management produces strategic entrepreneurship, allowing businesses to adapt to changing external conditions and maintain a competitive edge into the future (Lyver & Lu, 2018:442) even as they boost their output and profitability.

The growth and sustainability of the beef cattle SMEs in this study can be enhanced by strategic entrepreneurship and is based on the interaction between SMEs dealing with beef cattle and the conceptual components applied by the same SMEs. This is accomplished by implementing simultaneous advantage- and opportunity-seeking efforts to counteract the unfavourable consequences of the macroeconomic environment changes that are occurring (González-Perna *et al*., 2018:153–167).

In the real world of business, SMEs operate in an open setting where they must contend with a variety of external factors. As shown in figure 3.9 below, these influences can be distilled into government policy, economic factors, financial assistance, research and development, training and development, and the legal framework. These forces are dynamic and constantly changing in a competitive environment, as in the case of an open market economy (Vecchiato, 2012:436), which puts a great deal of pressure on SMEs. In such a setting, SMEs' ability to adapt to these dynamics and achieve performance-enhancing competitive advantage will determine their ability to survive. Through increased production, sales, and profitability, this is accomplished. To avoid negative effects, businesses must have systems in place to monitor customer behaviour, competitive activity, technological advancements, and the regulatory environment and adapt their operations accordingly.

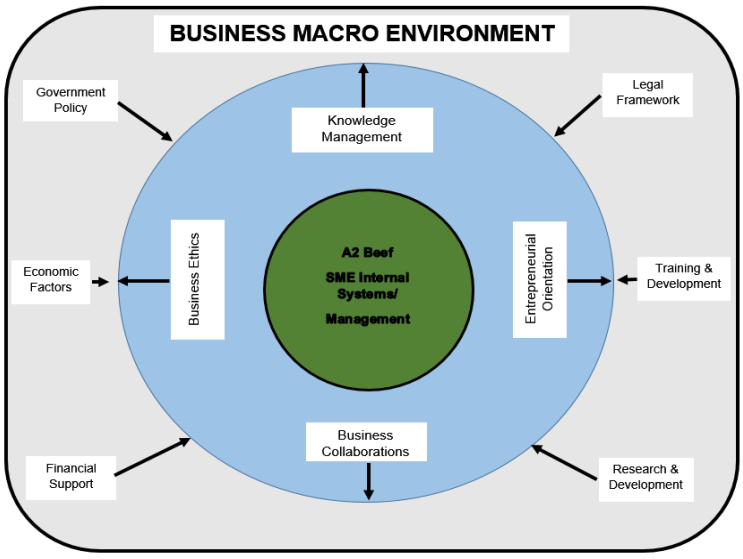

Figure 3.8: Interaction of SME and environmental forces

According to Figure 3.8 above, environmental influences stimulate a company's internal system. The environment can change as a result of competitors' actions, which in this case might include beef importers, consumers, and social behaviours, as well as changes in technology and/or governmental regulations (Kinkel *et al*., 2022:102). These changes in the environment could have a negative effect on the firm's output, sales, and ultimately profitability. Changes in the external environment act as stimulus for a firm's internal system. The internal system of a company is stimulated by factors such as inadequate knowledge management. The sustainability and expansion of the SMEs firm will be guaranteed by the implementation of these four concepts, namely knowledge management, entrepreneurial orientation, collaborations, and business ethics.

The newly proposed diagrammatic strategic entrepreneurial framework to increase A2 SMEs beef production, which is a proposed improvement to Ireland *et al.* (2003) one, is presented in figure 3.9 below. Which is the conceptual framework of the study.

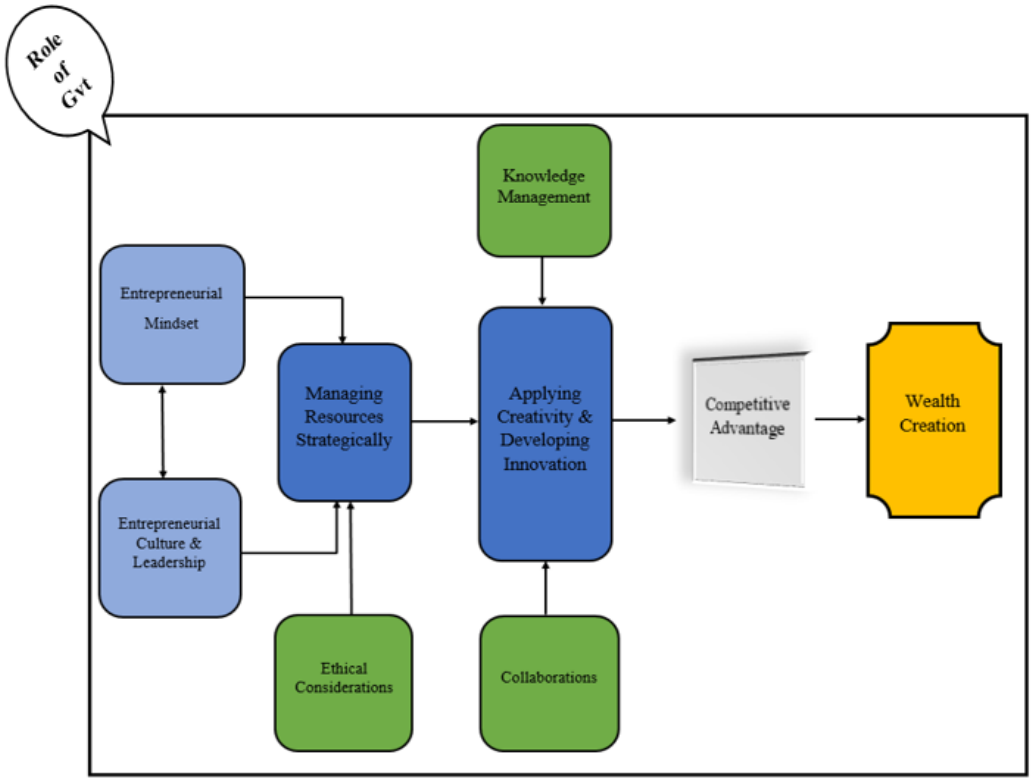

Figure 3.9: Proposed strategic entrepreneurial framework

Figure 3.9 is representative of the new proposed strategic entrepreneurial framework incorporating on improving from the Ireland *et al. (*2003) one incorporating the new elements being entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management, collaborations and business ethics.

In the context of this study, the concept of sustainable business growth is defined by Islam & Wahab, (2021) as an internal process of development and an increase in amount. The common measures of such being turnover, asset base, market share, physical output and profitability. Considering the volatility of the external business environment, above are only achievable through the business strategic entrepreneurial response, defined as a set of actions, measures or posture taken by the entrepreneur through simultaneous opportunity seeking and advantage seeking behaviours to counteract the negative effects of changes in customer dynamics, technological shifts, competitors' behaviour, and changes in legal and regulatory requirements and be able to attain and/or maintain superior performance (Aghazadeh, 2015:125-134). In a competitive business environment, entrepreneurs' survival, and business endeavours depend mostly on how they respond to these forces. Faced by the market competition, entrepreneurs must adopt entrepreneurial strategies such as proper knowledge management, entrepreneurial orientation, collaborations and business

ethical conduct. A variety of tactics are used in the response, which is influenced by factors like resource accessibility and availability, ease of execution, and infrastructural and human resource capabilities.

3.8.2 Conceptualising Knowledge Management

Manesh *et al.* (2020:289-300) conceptualised knowledge management as involving storing, growing, and sharing knowledge to enhance the knowledge base of staff for the ultimate benefit of the organisation and hence knowledge is an asset to the organisation that owns it including all aspects of handling and overseeing all the knowledge that exists within the organisation. Grimaldi *et al.* (2017:90-100) alluded knowledge management to be the art of leveraging the organisation's intangible assets. It is an aspect of managing the firm also inclusive of all relevant managerial areas. As opined by Hoksbergen *et al.* (2021:113), knowledge can be split into either explicit, tacit, or implicit. Skills easy to articulate and understand and to transfer to others are explicit knowledge, hence known also as formal or codified. Knowledge difficult to comprehend, package and transfer to others is tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is that which is difficult to teach like innovative thinking. Implicit knowledge is information that has not yet been codified but that would be practical to teach and hence Knowledge management is implementable enterprise-wide across industries. Liebowitz and Beckman, (2020:33) elaborated on it as the process (es) applicable in handling and overseeing every piece of knowledge that exists within a firm.

It has also be emphasised by ElKady, (2021:11) that knowledge management aids in problem solving, innovation and performance enhancement and facilitates the building processes critical to manage knowledge among participating external stakeholders thereby creating value (Veiga *et al*., 2020: 25), resulting in robust competitiveness.

3.8.3 The role of knowledge management in A2 beef cattle SMEs

Businesses today operate in a competitive environment that is characterized by globalization, shifting organizational structures, new worker profiles, preferences, and predispositions, as well as developments in information and communication technology and the emergence of knowledge management (Kotabe & Helsen, 2020:33). In an integrated strategy to identifying, capturing, assessing, retrieving, and sharing information, knowledge management maybe applied to enhances the diversified information sharing required within the beef cattle SME sector (Pärn, , 2017:45–55). Databases, papers, rules, and previously untapped worker experience and skills are all included in this. SMEs in the beef industry that are better at managing organizational and individual knowledge will be better equipped to navigate the obstacles of the current business climate and lead their organizations to higher growth levels. As a result, beef SMEs realize and

maintain organizational success for increased effectiveness, innovation, and competitiveness (Long *et al.,* 2018: 82-95).

Ho, *et al*. (2019:115-123) examined knowledge management and the extent to which it can affect the expansion of SMEs in the beef cattle industry. Knowledge management is important in the context of SMEs since it helps to record the knowledge and experience created throughout operations and procedures. Knowledge aids beef cattle SMEs in avoiding repeating historical failures, aids in creating solutions to recurring issues, and aids in realizing that knowledge is essential to business growth and survival. Knowledge may help organizations become more innovative, competitive, and sustainable if it is effectively used and leveraged (Parida *et al.,*2019:391). The intellectual capital of businesses must be utilized by SMEs in the beef cattle industry. Organizations with a high success rate in knowledge management leveraging gain operational efficiency as well as higher innovation and upmarket customer service (Tegethoff *et al.*,(2021:215).

The Zimbabwean beef cattle SMEs generally have serious deficiencies as regards other critical business resources like, labour, capital and entrepreneurial mind set and hence they are obliged to do more with less (Rasca *et al*., 2018:317). It is partly for this reason that knowledge within beef cattle SMEs needs requires leveraging for more effective and efficient goal attainment. Studies done by Brush and Vanderwerf (2018:66) have revealed that most SMEs are started based on strength in knowledge on critical aspects of the expertise on the business line operations by the entrepreneur. It is hence important that successful leveraging of knowledge be effectively and efficiently used for decision making.

Knowledge management effectively generate market and business intelligence that gives the beef cattle SME firms' ability to understand customer's preferences, competitor's actions, technology dynamics, focusses on long term benefits, survival and growth and the best business strategies applicable to specific business set ups. Inter-functional coordination within the firm guided by given systems and procedures becomes a critical aspect, which allows different departments or individuals to share market and other business activity information and take appropriate measures or actions (Mutha *et al.*, 2022:141) as a response to mitigate the challenges of the environmental dynamics. By means of generated business information, beef SME entrepreneurial firms, by means of the utilisation of an entrepreneurial mindset easily identify opportunities presented by the environmental semantics and exploit them ahead of competitors Bajdor *et al.* (2021:3595).

This study argues that integrating entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management, business ethics and collaborations augmented a good beef cattle SMEs framework in strategic entrepreneurship will sustain competitive advantage of the beef cattle SME firms. Knowledge management is necessary for continuous generation of business intelligence and information sharing within the firm which creates competitiveness (Shujahat *et al.*, 2017:212). The manufactured business information becomes a source of opportunity identification, and such is important to establish a solid entrepreneurial mind set to aid in identifying opportunities most likely to be attractive (Ricci *et al.*, 2021:108). In a competitive and dynamic environment that requires aggressive approach to market development, a strong knowledge management thrust maybe essential (Agarwal and Sambamurthy, 2020:243).

3.8.3 Relationship between knowledge management and firm performance

According to Mardani, *et al.* (2018:14), knowledge management and performance have a very strong positive association. Knowledge management is a useful tool for enhancing performance, according to Kharabsheh *et al* (2012:7) in their investigation of knowledge management techniques and their impact on organizational performance in pharmaceutical enterprises in Jordan. It is crucial to establish how well and how long a company can sustain its competitive advantage by looking at how well and how long it can implement knowledge-based operations.

In beef cattle SMEs, knowledge management impacts on the areas of economic and financial, market performance, technical performance, human performance and lastly on organisational performance. Financial performance involves aspects of profit, sales growth, cost reduction, return on investment etc. Marketing performance covers aspects of market share increase, market flexibility, customer satisfaction and service, among others. Technical performance is all about innovation, quality, growth core competences, efficiency etc. Human competences involve creativity, entrepreneurial growth etc. Finally, organisational performance involves external relationships, diffusion of new ideas, organisational agility, learning curve and flexibility in resource utilisation (Agman *et al.,* 2017:533-539).

Knowledge resembles one of the core competencies of human resources and hence it has an important role in improving the beef SMEs performance (Torabi *et al.,* 2016:473) which advocates that success of an organisation resonates with its ability to acquire and utilise knowledge and learning than its physical assets. Knowledge management happens through an organisational and systematic process to organise, stabilise, implement, and share explicit and implicit knowledge from employees, improve organisational performance, and create value (Samir, 2020:1-23).

3.8.4 Knowledge management link to entrepreneurial orientation

According to Hanif *et al.* (2018:10), entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management are linked but different conceptions. Knowledge management reflects the degree to which businesses are driven by systems, customers, competition information, and cross-functional cooperation in the strategic ideology of beef cattle SMEs (Lin *et al.,* 2019:112). This enables a business to better understand the demands of its clients—both visible and invisible—and to offer them more value (Matarazzo *et al*., 2021:642).

As alluded by Crespo *et al*. (2022:344) firms deep rooted entrepreneurial orientation without a strong knowledge management thrust have a very high capability to sniff market opportunities but are not properly placed to prioritise such opportunities for ultimate benefit of customers. Consequently, an entrepreneurial orientation by beef cattle SMEs not rooted in solid knowledge management may lead to innovations which may not be properly articulated by staff within and subsequently by the market. In the final analysis, a strong knowledge management orientation without a strong entrepreneurial orientation may not facilitate the level of business performance required (Tidd & Bessant, 2020:89). To achieve and maintain the competitive advantage required for sustained performance through the acquisition of the relevant competitive edge. It then becomes imperative that beef cattle SMEs fully understand and operationalise the synergy between knowledge management and entrepreneurial orientation to ensure that they are always a mile or two ahead of competition (Brown *et al*., 2020:655). Collaborations among firms in business operations is one of the prerequisites for success and hence the next section will interrogate the role of collaborations in beef cattle SMEs.

3.9 Collaborations

Collaborative entrepreneurship is the origination of a new and jointly manufactured set of ideas resultant from sharing of information and knowledge emanating from outside the firm (Franco & Haase, 2013:12). Collaborative entrepreneurship integrates strategic entrepreneurship and collaborative innovation which involves the creation of innovations by sharing of ideas, knowledge, and opportunities and heavily augments networking which has also been identified as a contributing factor to the effectiveness of collaboration (Shorten & Khoshgoftaar, 2019:1-48). Due to the increased rivalry in the market, collaboration, which is significantly aligned to networking, has emerged as a crucial aspect, particularly among SMEs involved in the beef cattle industry. In order to establish relationships with the outside world and gain access to knowledge, resources, markets, and technology (Semrau Werner, 2012:159; Andriof & Waddock, 2017:19), networking is the entrepreneurial behaviour that results in productive and long-lasting collaborations. As a

result, it is required for the following section to draw more conclusions about the function networking plays in fostering collaborative synergies in SMEs.

Networking being a by-product of collaboration offers beef cattle SMEs an opportunity to harness collaborative relations through forging flexible relationships with suppliers, competitors, customers, and public research institutions and fully capitalise on core competencies (Dick & Weaver, 2011:126; Smith, *et al*., 2022: 122). Collaborative networking organisations are in a better place to assimilate to new market preferences, can read competitors actions fast enough to develop new market offerings whenever market dynamics shift (Najafi-Tavani *et al*., 2018:200) Access to resources ensures that beef SMEs develop competences through product or process improvement that leads to performance. Collaborative innovation enhances the firm's ability to be continuously innovative in pursuit of strategic entrepreneurship (Utoyo *et al*., 2020:60), and increases access to scarce resources.

Collaboration leveraging results from the partners complementing skills and resources joining to create added value (Karlsson and Nisson, 2015:10). As propounded by Thorgren *et al.* (2012:13), the complementarity of the firm's resources and capabilities produce synergies for the collaborating firms. The said synergies stem from linkages in terms of skills, technological resources, financial resources among others (Franco & Haase, 2013:63). Beef SMEs gain in terms of continuous innovation and enhanced innovation, learning going into new markets and compatibility in terms of management style through such synergies (Shibin, *et al*., 2018:908). Stevenson and Jarillo, (2015:30) argued that collaboration can improve productivity, innovation and profitability also resulting in cost reduction. In beef SMEs, just like in any other business set up, collaboration can be beneficial to all stakeholders and result in long tern relationships leading to quality improvement.

3.9.1 Collaborative capabilities of beef cattle SMEs

Collaboration capability in beef cattle SMEs is identifiable through their ability to develop and to make profitable use of inter-organisational relationships with partners external to them (Andresen *et al.,* 2014:14; Li *et al.,* 2022: 30). Its focus is more on the ability to develop effective and sustainable linkages in beef cattle SMEs which result in mutual positive outcomes among the involved firms leading to firm's competitive advantage.

A frequent strategy used by businesses to achieve a competitive edge is for them to engage in partnerships with other organizations to supplement their needs for resources from networking partners (Randolph *et al*., 2020:103). Both Dickson and Weaver (2011:126) and Ireland *et al*. (2001:55) make reference to perspectives

that are broadly in agreement: networks help firms access the resources they require, but they do not ask for or pick up new skills from networking partners. If resource-constrained businesses like the A2 beef cattle SMEs are to supplement resource needs and create competitive advantage, this emphasis is especially pertinent to them. Friend, Dover, Malshe, and Peterson (2021:542). If beef cattle SME enterprises are to acquire such advantage, they must be able to coordinate the available resources in a way that results in competitive advantage. Resources, including those shared by partners, must be brought together for effective resource use, and coordination of those resources is crucial. This includes their efficient allotment and oversight to guarantee the highest possible return on invested resources.

A firm's ability to develop trust and confidence with cooperating partners and, as a result, be in a strong standing to share core competitive resources is a key component of solid relational capital within SMEs in the beef cattle ranching industry. In light of the foregoing context, the following section provides a brief explanation of how relational capital enhances company performance.

3.9.2 Relational Capital

Relational capital in beef cattle SMEs relates to collaborative relationships established between firms emanating from collaborations (Paoloni *et al.,* 2018:14). Anh *et al.* (2019:57) opined that a firm's capability to amass competitive advantage depends not just on its resource base but also its relational assets, and as such its relationships with other key firms play a critical role. Relational capital is critical mass for collaborative entrepreneurship (Akram *et al*, 2018:38). A precursor for knowledge transfer is developed through rational capital and hence the aspect of trust between firms or individuals involved becomes a necessity (Cai and Shi, 2022:307). For the trust to manifest itself then requires there to be proper partners' knowledge and hence the following section will interrogate the role of partner's knowledge in collaboration.

3.9.3 Partner's knowledge

The collection of a firm's partners like suppliers, customers and competitors is termed partners knowledge (Meihami and Meihami, 2012:90). Such information utilises potential resources and constraints available within each potential partner. Bergeron *et al.* (2020:1567) opined that beef cattle SME owners or managers being fully acquainted about their partners can put in place proper exchange mechanisms and governance structures. It also follows that such firms can avoid or properly deal with abnormal occurrences in their partnerships for the sustenance of their relationships. Knowing the right information about partners enables businesses to choose partners who have the necessary resources and skills to meet their goals.

Entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management and collaborations together with other elements propounded by scholars as proponents of beef cattle SME success may to be complete without fusing in the concept of good business ethical conduct. The next section will the look at the role of good business ethics as one of the underpins of the A2 beef SMEs success.

3.10 Business Ethics

Hare (1989:73) argued that ethics resonates on an understanding of what is right or wrong and taking appropriate action to do the right thing. Most ethical dilemmas in the workplace are, as asserted by ethicists like (Ibid, 1989) who advocate that there is always a right thing to do based on moral principle and also that the right thing to do might depend on the situation and hence clearly it is about what is good or right in day-to-day human interaction. Adding to this assertion, Rosspow and Van vuuren (2017: 5) ethical behaviour is as a result of one taking certain action after considering the impact of such not only on oneself only but also to another person or other people. Ethical conducts principally guided by values such as fairness, honesty, respect responsibility, kindness, etc., also referred to as moral or ethical principles (ibid, 2017:5).

3.10.1 Good business ethical conduct

As alluded by Peter Drucker as pointed out by Cohen (2010:23) organisations and their management have great power and influence in society and hence how they conduct themselves and actions they take must have stakeholder interests at heart. It is perceived by The Institute of Business Ethics (2007:1) that most directors and owners of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) rarely value the importance of good, trusting relationships with customers, employees, suppliers and the community. They lack the appreciation that the success of their company heavily depends on it. SME owners and managers have the tendency to appreciate ethics in business when they themselves bear the brunt of an unethical conduct, not when they are the perpetrators. For this and other reasons, what governs how they behave becomes more demanding compare to what is applicable to individuals. It is from this background that the next section will look at the aspects of right, wrong and dilemmas.

3.10.2 Right, wrong and dilemmas

Society has conclusively arrived at what it denotes to be ethically wrong or right. A good example is the appreciation that killing an innocent person is ethically wrong and telling the truth is ethically right. Rosspow and Van vuuren (2017:28) argue that the same is applicable in business where aspects like respect of the dignity of employees and customers and other stake holders is ethically right. On the other hand, disrespect

for the same becomes ethically wrong. Stakeholders of SME organisation are known to be more vulnerable to unethical treatment than those of big and well-established organisations (Allen, 2012:16). The aspects of dishonest to the employer on the part of employees through, for example the theft and abuse of company resources is grossly unethical, and this is prevalent in both SMEs and large-scale organisations (Ibid, 2012:16). Beef cattle SMEs must have gross appreciation of the important role stakeholders play in the growth and sustainability of their businesses. To that end, they must ensure that their organisational systems inculcate the right environment for the prevalence of such, as propounded by Smith (2008: 165). Notwithstanding the exposed clarity that is clearly known as regards what is wrong and right, difficult situations come up in daily business activities where the distinction between what is ethically wrong, and right is obscure leading to the discussion of the concept of 'moral or ethical dilemma' which the next paragraph will briefly expound on.

Astute decision making in situations where one is faced with having to make a choice between two options where one must must choose between a moral and an immoral act. It is imperative that employees must handle pressures to perform and help the company achieve its objectives without being tempted to take the easy way out. Rossouw and Vanvuuren (2017:7) noted that one is faced with having to make a choice between two options, all of which are at variance with normally acceptable ethical standard. This is liked to a scenario where one is in between a rock and a hard surface. Having to choose between competing good values like loyalty and honesty is also tantamount to an ethical dilemma since the competing ethical value is compromised (Ibid, 2017:7).

In the end, employees will inevitably face a variety of decisions throughout their careers, therefore employers should try to give training and knowledge to help them do so. Choices between political allegiance and ethical business decisions are issues likely to cause dilemmas for most SMEs in beef cattle ranching in Zimbabwe considering that the land issues in Zimbabwe have some political DNA and hence such political orientations shape the culture of the organisations.

There is diversity in cultures in different organisations and hence some companies focus is on profits and results ahead of everything else (Cook,2005:37) and hence management may not reprimand for ethical breeches should a worker produce results. Cook (2005:37) suggest that ethical dilemmas may arise when people feel the pressure to act immorally to please managers, also when they can't whistle blow their co-workers' or supervisor's bad behaviour. Barrett (2013:49) highlights that ethics in the workplace often hinges on matters of productivity. Unbecoming behaving organisations may allow or even demand unethical

practices if it means greater productivity. Studies have however shown that such benefits usually accrue in the short term and hence such unethical behaviour catches up in the medium to long term.

Some employees whose ethical conduct is properly placed might be adversely affected by the unethical conduct of their workmates and bosses and that will eventually hinge on their performance and that of the organisation at large the result being diminishing returns. Management that leaves an unethical culture to permeate their structures are brewing a deadly cancer that will by and large destroy the organisation De George (1999:33). Upholding perpetual good ethical conduct to both external and internal stakeholders resonate with growth and sustainability of the organisation (Gopinath and Mitra: 2017:62-70). As alluded by the online ethics centre, employees with loyalty to the organisation are less likely to be involved in organisational asset embezzlement of all forms. The same source also revealed that a good ethical culture reduces staff turnover and hence ensures organisational stability, efficiency and effectiveness. Sometimes bad ethical conduct may lead to negative legal implications and hence the following section will have a quick overview of ethics and the law.

3.10.3 Ethics and the Law

While Rossouw and Van vuuren (2017:7) alluded to the there is a thin line between ethics and the law at face value, but however they also concede that there are significant differences thereto. Ariely (2012:93) in agreement with Allen (2012:61) emphasised that both ethics and the law govern actions by people daily in the world and the two often work complement each other ensuring people act in an acceptable manner. It is based on ethics that laws are enacted and enforced by governments whereupon the law carries with it the punishment for violations while ethics does not. Personal or societal values define the origin of ethical conduct, but external coercion is the drive behind law adherence (Rossouw and Van vuuren, 2017:7). However, action can be in line with both good ethical conduct and also under the auspices of legality.

Ventimiglio (2015:20) reiterated that good ethical conduct helps ensure that the organisation and its staff confine themselves within the legal auspices of the country and avert the costly legal implications. Beef SMEs in Zimbabwe generally have limited resources and hence they need to have the ethical heart to, as much as possible the legal procedures in their operations to avoid being at odds with the law. Illegality paints a bad picture about the organisation to stakeholders and may lead to loss of money through legal suits and fines and that hinges negatively on the future going concern of the organisation since the organisation loses public credibility, production levels decrease and there will be general loss of respect (Freedman, 2018:55). Good ethical conduct and proper adherence to the legal framework of the land are an impetus to the good corporate

governance which is a critical mass to the success and sustainability of SMEs (Al-Najjar, 2018:19), hence the following section will briefly explore the role corporate governance plays.

3.10.4 Corporate governance

Submissions by Cura (2020:101); chen and James (2020:77) concur that corporate governance is the way in which a company is governed through a set of rules that provide direction and control towards attainment. Also, through corporate governance, risk is monitored and addressed to enhance performance optimisation. SMEs in beef cattle ranching must thrive for good governance through enacting operational processes and procedures that produce results meant to meet the needs and wants of stakeholders while making strategic utilisation of resources at its exposure also ensuring organisational prosperity (Chen and James, 2020:77).

McRitchie (2020:86) pointed out that SME beef business leaders play a critical role in influencing followership and imparting inspiration to ensure the establishment of a healthy, compliant, transparent, and accountable organisational culture which ensure continuous improvement and growth of the beef SMEs. Governance Today (2021:19) has exposed that an environment of good governance culture, incidence of fraud, tolerance and support of illegitimate activities are minimized leading to improved organisational performance.

Good governance in beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe can contribute immensely to ensuring the presence of a good framework for achieving great plans of action and performance measurement and also compliance to disclosure requirements to safeguard shareholder interests and value (ibid, 2021:69). Of note is the fact that there has been a departure from the stereo type of notion that corporate governance is the prerogative of large and established firms in the developed world (Berglof and Van Thadden, 1999:24). Sub-Saharan Africa has embraced that also in SMEs and hence the concept has to be seen to be taking centre stage is Sub-Saharan Agri SMEs incusive of the cattle ranching ones considering the critical role they are playing in their respective countries' economies (Bennett and Robson, 2004:91), concurring with (Eisenberg *et al.*, 1998:59).

3.10.5 The importance of good governance in beef SMEs

Economic growth is fuelled by SMEs in most economies the world over and in Zimbabwe, they make up 60% of the employed and contribute about 50% of the national GDP (Zimstats, 2019) given that they represent a vast portion of the firm tissue in the economy. Majukwa (2019:4) laments lack of proper governance mechanisms as having contributed to the massive failure of state-owned enterprises in Zimbabwe. This has had a spill over effect to other sectors of the economy, the beef cattle SMEs included. Majukwa (2019:4)

concurring with Chidoko *et al,* (2011:25) Zimbabwe, being an Agri-based driven economy should inculcate good governance culture for the enhancement of improved SMEs performance and economic development. From the researcher's perspective, Zimbabwean beef SMEs sector requires a paradigm shift to develop full appreciation of the importance of good governance. The fact that A2 SMEs under this study are a product of an unethical government backed militia style land reform informs one that there could be a culture of bad governance embedded in the A2 beef SMEs which requires a change.

Several macro-economic negative factors have notably contributed the disruptive economic environment in Zimbabwe including, lack of finance, shortage of equipment and technology and lack of access to international markets to mention just a few as propounded by Mwareya (2019:4). These are some of the aspect hampering beef SMEs development in Zimbabwe including lack of management competence as suggested by Ngarava (2019:3). Lack of proper accounting and other aspects of records management are typical barriers of beef cattle SMEs funding. These negatives have been noted to swamp efforts of beef cattle SME development.

Proper management internal control systems, in line with proper corporate governance procedures require the separation of ownership and control hence it becomes so tempting to believe that corporate governance is not applicable in A2 beef cattle SME set ups. Presence of just a few employees who usually happen to be relatives of the owner renders the system absent of the separation of ownership and control, bringing in the notion that there is no need for corporate governance (Tadu, 2018:9). The absence of public accountability, disclosure requirements and mandatory auditing also contribute to possible lax of corporate governance adherence in Beef cattle SMEs. It remains critically important that corporate governance procedures be adhered to ensure SMEs development and sustainability.

The above arguments point to the fact that there is need for a paradigm shift in beef cattle SMEs as far as corporate governance issues are concerned (AL-Najjar, 2018:3). The existence of "external board" even at that small level may lead to better decisions and help sustenance of the business leading to better resources attraction. Non-executive directors could also introduce creativity through opinions and suggestions during decision making. In most Zimbabwean SMEs, as alluded by Zikana (2019:12), one of the major drawbacks of SME development is poor managerial competences. As SME with some corporate governance structure will better overcome these problems (Ibid, 2019:12), through the expertise and more stringent internal controls measures introduced by the board members. If beef cattle SMEs are to infuse corporate governance structures at an early stage of their life cycle, they gain experience and instil discipline in the management

of the firm. External parties would help ensure sound management practices. Sifile and Dangwa (2018:33) weighed into this debate reiterating that corporate governance draws in a certain level of confidence into the company, which embeds some level of integrity, and such are some of the important fundamental to business prosperity and economic development sustainability and growth (Gono, 2014:19; Brahim & Nourredine, 2017:34). Good governance hence becomes critical in improving the organisation's prospects getting funding. The application of good corporate governance principles reduces problems related to information asymmetry and hence makes the SMEs less risky to invest in (Al-Najjar, 2018:11).

Conclusively, if beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe infuse good corporate governance in their structures, they are perpetuating a culture that will give new strategic outlooks that enhance the firms' entrepreneurial orientation and competitiveness. Del Baldo 2012:1) individuated the link between social engagement, social statements and governance of SMEs and further alluded that there is an adhesion of these to the ideological practices of corporate social responsibility (CSR). On that strength, the following paragraph will at the impact of CSR in SMEs growth and sustainability.

3.10.6 The role of corporate social responsibility

As underlined by Donald and Walsh (2015:53) organisations are part of a greater society and hence they see themselves being in a relationship of responsibility with the same societies in which they have a presence. CSR, as explained by THE United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO: 2020). It has become fashionable for organisations to be conscious about having a deliberate positive impact on the society around them. That is a result of an organisation's self-regulating model that helps it to be having social accountability (Fernando, 2021:74). There is hence consensus by Donald and Walsh (2015:53) and Fernando, (2021) that CSR is a broad ideology not limited to any form but is guided by the organisation or industry. Through their involvement in corporate social responsibility, organisations are cementing a very strong relationship with society. As far as conclusions by Leonard (2019:17), in his study on four types of corporate social responsibility, he alluded those benefits of CSR accrue to both society and organisation.

Promotion of CSR in beef cattle SMEs approaches that fit the respective needs and capabilities of such businesses and do not adversely affect their economy viability. Recognition of ethical and social dimension is founded on a vast corpus of theory made up of four groups, the first one being Friedman (1962:82) and his argument being that the business of business is business not social responsibility. Focus is on maximising shareholder value. If managers of organisation, according to Freidman are to partake of corporate social responsibility then it must be at their own personal expense. However, Dunfee (1999:119), concurring with

Donald (1994:98) and Davis (1973:114), weighed in with the political theories comprising of corporate constitutionalism, integrated social contract, and corporate citizenship focusing on the role of business in society. The integrated theories, as given by Rossouw and Van vuuren, (2017:7) advocates for issues management, public responsibility, stake holder management, and corporate social performance coexist and maintain that social demands are part of the integration of business to society (Garriga & Mele, 2004:57). The fourth represents a collection of ethical theories which focused on the right thing to achieve a good society (Ibid: 2004:64).

A survey undertaken by Finscope Business Consumer Survey (2012) revealed economies of almost all African countries, and even other parts of the world, are anchored by SMEs as the main source of economic livelihood and Liberto, (2021:8) reiterates that SMEs hold the future of the world economy. Research by Memili, Fang, Chrisman and DeMassis, (2015) acknowledge that over and above the direct impact on economic growth through competition and collaborations amongst themselves or between SMEs with big firms. This underpins the aspects of job creation and involvement in the value chain of provision of goods and services.

Economic participation by beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe strengthens the economy and promotes fair competition in the marketplace. They must hence be driven by the mandate to promote fair competition in the marketplace giving reasonable return to investors, fair compensation to employees and provision of goods and services to customers at fair prices (Sinha, 2021). Moyo, Duffett and Knott (2020:63) concurred with the likes of Camona, (2017) and Tabak (2015:102) that organisations have an unquestionable responsibility on social environment on communities around them. Rossouw and Van vuuren (2017:31) suggested that there is great need to consider the impact of their operations, products, and services on the community. For them to remain relevant and good co-habitats in these communities, beef SMEs must not put public health and safety at risk and must ensure that their activities don't inflict negativity on the development of communities around.

As established by (DeBaldo, 2012:11), CSR harnesses and augments the convergence between mission, governance, and accountability; the alignment towards CSR is therefore reflected positively on the governance of SMEs. Among SMEs, the orientation towards CSR begins with the entrepreneur and is an exhibition of both the values aligned to personal goals as well as the values tied to cultural and social variables in the territory from which he comes. Beef cattle SMEs, just like all other organisations have a responsibility over the natural environment and must have consideration over how they will impact on it (Majukwa,

2019:47). Protection of non-renewable natural resources, as propounded by Moyo *et al* (2020:11) must be priority by SMEs. The study will shed lighter on understanding if beef SMEs are to the good regarding this aspect since this may affect their continued relations not only with the surrounding community but also laws of the land to ensure the going concern aspect of their operations.

3.10.7 Bridging opportunity and advantage seeking behaviour with business ethics.

Beef cattle SMEs are better placed to properly link and obtain synergies from opportunity seeking and advantage seeking behaviours by engaging in proper business ethical conduct (Barauskaite, & Streimikiene, 2021:278-287). This calls for proper ethical intent on each firm to be a fair and just partaker in the business jungle. Things must be done right, properly and fairly and hence the call for good ethical conduct cannot be over emphasised. Business ethics is about identifying and implementing standards of conduct that will ensure that, at a minimum level, business does not detrimentally impact on the interests of the stakeholders (Rossouw & Van Vuuren, 2017:5).

Key aspects of note under the auspices of business ethics relevant to this study are ethics and the law, ethics and values, integrity, social responsibility, corporate reputation, corporate governance and strategy. The beef cattle SMEs need these aspects to augment advantage and opportunity seeking in their strategic entrepreneurial endeavours. For beef cattle SMEs to be properly strategic entrepreneurially oriented, there is needed to appreciate that while there are similarities between ethics and law, there are also material variations (Dmytriyev *et al.*, 2021:1441). The concepts strive towards what is right in human interaction and society. The law is bound by public and political process and employs the state power to make sure all abide by the regulations of the law. Ethics comes out of personal values such as the sense of responsibility to do what is right within a person as opposed to the external pressure of the law (ibid). Beef SMEs to run sustainable operations need integrity, which simply refers to human character. Beef cattle SMEs would ideally be perceived in the positive light hence giving their organisations some growth and sustainability impetus.

Business ethics space of beef cattle SMEs which impact very well on the opportunity seeking and advantage seeking endeavours of a firm has other aspects related to it such as corporate social responsibility, corporate governance, good corporate reputation and risk and strategy. As regards corporate social responsibility, businesses are part of societies in which they operate and hence find themselves in bonded relationships with the same societies (Kuada and Hinson, 2012:521-536). Companies can impact their societies either positively or negatively. Companies can add value to the society as they create employment, create value for the stakeholders and developing opportunities for societal members. They can also affect the society

negatively through the exploitation of employees, corrupting officials or by causing harm and degradation to local communities and damaging the environment (ibid: 2012:521-536). The relationship between the societies therefore has an ethical dimension. These are critical aspects to be embed in the opportunity and advantage seeking moves of strategic entrepreneurial endevours of firms. Businesses must appreciate that their business is not only to create wealth for shareholders but also to impact positively to the society in which they operate for continued sustainability. Where ethical conduct is properly in place, societies want to identify themselves with the organisation and continuously do business with such firms. This becomes tantamount to increased business relations causal to sustainability of such firms.

A business must not by all means harm the interests of others for it to remain popular with stakeholders and hence ethical implications of any action taken has to be considered carefully. This has to be borne in mind in tandem with the opportunity seeking and advantage seeking moves to help ensure sustainability of the organization going into the future (Rossouw & Vuuren, 2017:268-269). According to Hendrikse, (2015:352) a firm has to reflect on itself through engagement with its stakeholders and hence there will always be codetermination of the firm's destiny by its primary stakeholders as they get continuous consultation and involvement in the goings on. Good corporate governance results in a good partnership with shareholders, directors and management to provide wealth creation and economic well-being to the wider community of stakeholders (Hendrikse & Hendrikse, 2015:104). This critical aspect of wealth enhancement has not been directly linked to the strategic entrepreneurship discourse, let alone in the model. This helps to enhance the firm's reputation to give it a good name thereby having an edge against competitors.

3.10.8 Chapter summary

This chapter discusses the effect of a dynamic environment on a firm's performance as well as the efforts made by earlier studies to develop mechanisms of a firm's reaction to waves of ongoing environmental changes. It carefully examined the development of strategic entrepreneurship as a widely accepted response mechanism to establish a firm's sustainable competitive advantage required to provide better results and generate wealth. The literature has shown that, despite the widespread acceptance of strategic entrepreneurship as a suitable mechanism to address the issues of sustainability shortcomings, mediocre firm performance, and threats posed by environmental change, the discourse is still in its infancy and has not yet developed strong constructs of its own. It begins as the meeting point or confluence of strategic management and entrepreneurship.

The analytical review has demonstrated that competitive behaviour (a component of entrepreneurship) and advantage seeking behaviour are simultaneously fostered by strategic entrepreneurship (central to strategic management). According to research, it is difficult for a company to combine advantage- and opportunity-seeking behaviour simultaneously in practice. Small businesses are better placed to take advantage of opportunities than big organisations, which are good at taking advantage of opportunities. The maintenance of a competitive advantage obtained via the strategic management of resources while taking advantage of opportunities is the responsibility of advantage seeking. Small enterprises lack such capacity as a result of a lack of resources. Due to technological inertia, bureaucracy in decision-making, internal politics, and other similar reasons, large organizations are typically at a disadvantage when it comes to consistently finding new opportunities. In light of this, earlier research has hinted that the combination of strategic management and entrepreneurship is more of a body of contested theory than a settled question, opening the door for further creative research in the area for further articulation.

The chapter also discussed in detail the conceptual framework of the study. It has clearly illustrated how entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management, collaboration and business ethics can be knit together to form a formidable force in building a strategic entrepreneurial framework for increasing beef cattle production in Zimbabwe through A2 beef SMEs. How the externalities of a business can impact on the business operations have been exposed. In a competitive environment, as in the case of an open market economy, these forces are dynamic and keep changing at a fast pace (Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009:7), which create immense pressures on beef cattle SMEs. In such a setting, SMEs' ability to adapt to these dynamics and achieve performance-enhancing competitive advantage will determine their ability to survive.

The conceptual framework of this study has been built around four variables namely entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management, collaboration and business ethics and clearly assimilated to the opportunity seeking and advantage seeking concept embedded in strategic entrepreneurship.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, extensive review of literature and theories that form the foundation of this study was discussed. The present chapter discusses the research methodology adopted. The methodology applied was adopted from Saunders et al., (2019) research onion. The research onion explains pictorially the various components under the research methodology for this study. The research onion by Saunders et al., (2019) provided the steps the researcher follows to achieve the research objectives as depicted in Figure 4.1.

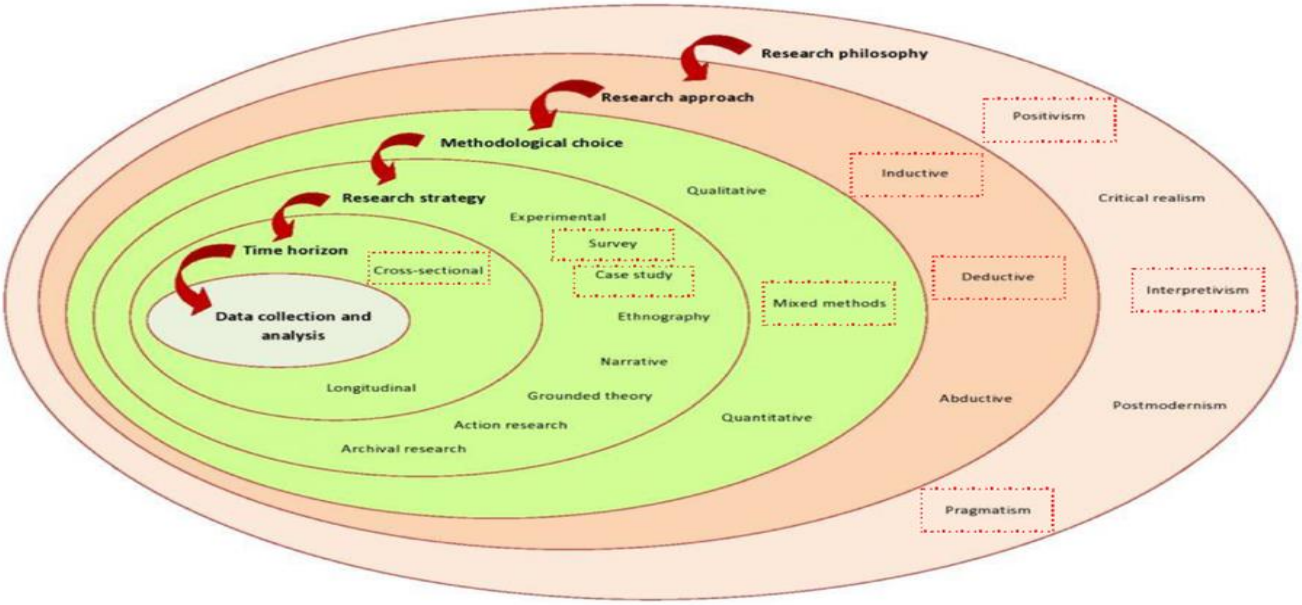

Figure 4.1 The research onion: Saunders *et al.(*2019)

4.2 Research philosophies

Ontology, epistemology, phenomenology, axiology, and Pragmatism are some of the research philosophies that have been frequently used in research. Some of these philosophies' elements can be applied to how beef SMEs perform. An ontology is a formal, understandable statement of a shared understanding (Gruber, 1995; Borst *et al.,* 1997; Studer *et al*., 1998). Ontologies, according to Gruber (1993) and Madni *et al.* (2001), can guarantee that various systems have a common language that is integrated into knowledge sharing and

reuse. The ontology of the entrepreneurship theory is composed of the well-designed language that is weaved throughout the well-crafted, rigorous logical reasoning of the entrepreneurial process. The researchers have identified five key features of the entrepreneurship development hypothesis: intuition, belongingness, fluidity, learning, and awakening (Power, Di Domenico & Miller, 2017:36-48). These components make up the domain of the ontology for the entrepreneurial growth theory. This point of view is in line with the evaluation of the entrepreneurial orientation of the A2 beef SMEs that was done in order to meet the objectives.

The philosophy of knowledge, epistemology, is concerned with how knowledge is acquired and from what sources (Power, Di Domenico & Miller, 2017:36-48). In terms of research, one's worldview and level of expertise greatly influence how they evaluate evidence; hence it is important to state their philosophical stance up front. This was relevant to the research since the researcher was learning more about the national A2 beef SME operational framework and how it applied to the participants' A2 beef SMEs. It was crucial for the researcher to understand the research's epistemic constraints throughout the process to determine how the newly proposed framework might bridge that gap (Smith & McGannon, 2018:101-121).

In phenomenological research, the researcher asks experts to provide descriptions of the phenomenon. The findings can be used to develop a theory that can be tested later when the researcher has finished analyzing the themes and data (Flowerday & Schraw 2000). The interpretive, naturalistic technique used in qualitative research, according to Creswell (1998:15), involves the researcher trying to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings that individuals assign to them. The philosophy of phenomenology is qualitative in nature. The phenomenological philosophy is based on the involvement of participants in the investigation of a recent or well-established topic of study. The exploratory nature of this research made the pragmatic philosophy relevant. Phenomenological study aims to investigate and characterize a phenomenon, such as management competence in the context of the A2 beef SME. This inference is being drawn from the viewpoint of a target group of people who were methodologically chosen based on their perceptions of the general participation in the management of the beef cattle industry. The researcher used a semi-structured interview approach and criterion sampling, which provided access to detailed information on the target themes from the participants, as outlined by Creswell (1998). This required the use of informants with extensive knowledge of beef cattle operations.

According to Pankina (2020), the value aspect of an object defines its axiology and distinguishes between material and non-material values, the latter of which are the universal human values. The philosophical study

of value is known as axiology (Biedenbach & Jacobsson, 2016:139-155). It focuses on what you value in your research and contains questions regarding the nature and classification of values as well as what kinds of objects have value. The researcher's values will influence how he conducts his study and what he values in research findings. The researcher's high level of objectivity, curiosity, dedication, and attention to detail throughout the entire research process in the interactions with the research participants, which are aspects of the dictates of the axiology philosophy. Axiology philosophy upholds the treatment of the participants with dignity, as well as a high level of confidentiality hence the research's execution was conducted with a very high level of ethical conduct to align with the philosophy (Prasetyo, 2020:14-25). Ideally, within the parameters of research execution, all moral and ethical principles were upheld.

The philosophy that is pragmatism in dealing with people, their physical environment, spiritual beliefs, cultural circumstances, and the values they attach to what they do, played a crucial supporting role to the other ideologies that were mentioned. The philosophies provide a comprehensive approach to the research study as they explore all the factors influencing the development of the business operations of the A2 beef SMEs. The applicability of pragmatism as the guiding philosophy in this study will be examined in the next section.

4.2.1 Pragmatism philosophy

The study's primary research philosophy is pragmatism. A method known as pragmatism contends that there are numerous ways to perceive reality and to conduct research into it, and that combining various perspectives may result in a better knowledge of the phenomena under study (Iovino & Tsitsianis, 2020:44). According to this perspective, research plans should integrate operational choices based on "what will work best" in determining the answers to the research questions. Therefore, research is carried out in novel and dynamic ways to address research concerns. It is carried out based on the assumption of what will be most effective in determining the answers to the research questions, enabling pragmatic researchers to conduct research in creative and dynamic ways to address issues.

The pragmatic philosophical approach is suited for this study since Zimbabwe needs to explore information that can be immediately applied to address the economic problems the nation is currently experiencing. Once established, the A2 beef SME strategic entrepreneurial framework will be a useful instrument for addressing the issue of beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe following the land reform legislation of 2002 (Mitchell & Education, 2018:269). A strategic entrepreneurial framework was developed because of this study's second goal, which

was to investigate the business models of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) engaged in beef cattle ranching in Zimbabwe.

4.3 Research paradigm

The research paradigm is determined by philosophy. The most prevalent paradigms for study in social science are interpretivism, positivism, and critical thinking (Corry, Porter & McKenna, 2019:30). The interpretivism and positivist paradigms were both utilised in this study, which used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in combination, with triangulation being used to increase its rigor.

Table 4.1: Difference between Positivism and Interpretivism

Adapted from Mackenzie & Knipe (2006)

PARADIGM	METHODS	DATA COLLECTION SAMPLES
Positivism	Quantitative dominant supported by qualitative	Experiments Quasi experiments Tests Scales
Interpretivism	Qualitative methods predominate although supported by quantitative	Interviews Observations Document reviews Visual data analysis

According to Rensburg (2010:8), interpretivism is a method of social research that emphasizes the value of insider perspectives in comprehending social realities. According to Creswell (2009:54), interpretivists contend that the goal of study is to make social reality understandable and expose its innately meaningful behaviours, which must be understood from the inside out. According to Shilinge (2016:14), there is no generalization in the interpretivism method since the researchers are concerned with the context and think that there are gaps in the body of existing knowledge and glaring weaknesses in the literature. Since

interpretivism fills in the blanks and infers logical patterns, it departs from the broad perspective. The qualitative interpretivism approach entails doing interviews, talking to individuals, and undertaking analysis as the dialogue develops (Yanow, 2017:435). It is not organized, and the researchers develop themes by interpreting the conversations (Rensburg: 2004;6). As this strategy entails contact with the respondents, it is applied in the earliest stage of data gathering.

Positivists seek to identify the causal relationships in a separate external reality (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016:54). Logic will be derived by interpretive social scientists from the purposefully created and intersubjectively shared meaning in social contexts. When it's necessary to peel back the many layers of social reality to reveal its fundamental character and enable transformation, the critical social scientist's method is important. In this regard, they make the supposition that it is possible to investigate and clarify the nature and significance of social action. Critical social scientists contend that hidden structures must be found, and they employ theoretical models to find these patterns. The critical approach paradigm is inappropriate for this study since no hidden processes need to be discovered.

Since positivism is a methodical approach to doing research and emphasizes the significance of verifiable facts, it is relevant to and practical for this topic. This study entailed analyzing observed trends and establishing correlations between factors pertaining to A2 beef SMEs in order to determine the applicability of this paradigm as well. This paradigm has been seen to be appropriate and results-oriented for the aims of this research since positivists hold that social reality reflects certain patterns and that human behavior is a product of these patterns. A2 beef SMEs business activity trends were also established, and their rationale and consequences were derived in order to determine whether or not they are consistent with an entrepreneurial orientation. The positivist paradigm's applicability in this study is further complicated by the fact that it is integrated into the social phenomenon, which contends that since social phenomena are amenable to external empirical observation and hold that all knowledge is founded on facts (Gilbert & Doran, 2018: 17), it is a science of verification and employs the principle of generalizing the results from the sample, which must be representative. The results of this study will be generalized to all A2 beef cattle SMEs in the nation, so the positivist approach, which is quantitatively practical, will be helpful since it is a tool to test, prove, and analyze data before generalizing the results.

The positivism paradigm has been deemed appropriate for this study, which aimed to establish the strategic solutions that Zimbabwe needs in order to fully utilize the potential of SMEs in beef cattle in the Makonde

and Zvimba districts and to generalize its findings across the nation. The study also aimed to confirm the competence, government support, and availability of resources.

Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004:2) and Morgan (2007:6), who stated that paradigm differences are mutually exclusive of one another but can be employed in conjunction with one another to answer research objectives in a study, both support this strategy. The study examined how SMEs engaged in beef cattle in Zimbabwe may be improved using an exploratory sequential research design and an applied qualitative and quantitative research approach. The complementary and integrative benefits of employing mixed methodologies for thorough research are acknowledged by Molina-Azorin *et al*. (2017: 183).

4.4 Mixed method strategy

The research process was integrated. This study's methodology for data gathering and analysis combines quantitative and qualitative research approaches to more fully understand a research problem (Creswell, 2012:28). Thanks to the use of hybrid approaches, the researcher was able to highlight the benefits of both procedures within one single study while reducing their shortcomings.

Because of its adaptability, Creswell (2014:37) recognises the development of the mixed approach. Mixed methods are described by Johnson et al. (2007:123) as the blending of aspects from quantitative and qualitative approaches to improve the breadth and depth of understanding and the consistency of investigations. The idea behind mixed methods is that, in comparison to using only one strategy, combining the two main research procedures yields a greater grasp of the research elements. Because the two methods in mixed methods complement one another, coupled methods are growing more popular. In order to strengthen the validity of the findings, this study on A2 beef SMEs used mixed methods research. As a result, a concrete synthesis was produced.

The table 4.2 below shows the difference between quantitative and qualitative research methods

According to Hampshire (2017: 358), triangulation has advantages such as data enrichment and in-depth analysis. Triangulation improved the results' validity by enabling both statistical and interpretive analysis of the collected data, which led to a proper and more illuminating convergence of findings (Mangan, 2004).

Table 4.2: Difference between Quantitative and Qualitative research methods

Adapted from Newman & Ridenour (1993: 3)

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Assumptions	Seeks objective reality from facts	Reality is socially constructed
Purpose	Looks for facts	Looks for understanding
Approach	Experimental and correlational research	A form of ethnographic research
Research role	Researcher is detached	Researcher is immersed in the setting

In qualitative dominant mixed methods research, one relies on a qualitative, constructivist-poststructuralist-critical understanding of the research process while also acknowledging that most research projects would benefit from the incorporation of quantitative data and methodologies (Johnson *et al*., 2007b: 124). This is a sequential exploratory technique. The goal of qualitative research methodologies is to learn about and comprehend participant experiences, viewpoints, and thoughts. This study investigates reality, meaning, or purpose (Hiatt, 1986). The focus of qualitative research is on phenomena that are related to the subjective evaluation of attitudes, opinions, and behaviour. According to Mouton and Marais (1989:157), it is an approach in which the procedures are formalized and explicated less strictly, the scope is less clearly defined, and the researcher conducts their research in a more philosophical way. Researchers that use qualitative methods examine phenomena in their natural environments to comprehend, discover, and make sense of them. Most qualitative research techniques involve interviews, focus groups, observations, case studies, games, and role acting (Rensburg, 2010).

The sort of mixed research known as quantitative dominant mixed methods depends on a quantitative, post-positivist understanding of the research process while also acknowledging that the incorporation of qualitative data and methodologies is likely to be beneficial for most research projects (Johnson *et al.,* 2007b: 124). The term "sequential explanatory" also applies to this. According to Mouton and Marais (1989:157), a "quantitative approach" is a strategy utilized by social science researchers that is more explicitly controlled, formalized in character, and has a narrower scope.

The researcher was able to identify causal relationships between variables in the study of A2 beef SMEs by using quantitative methods, and as a result, hypotheses were built to be able to capture these relationships. Cause-and-effect relationships between phenomena were shown via causal explanations. According to

Rensburg (2010), this method entails examining the causes and effects of occurrences, which in the social sciences is accomplished by utilizing a large sample size. Positiveism served as the foundation for quantitative research, which focuses on quantifiable characteristics of human behavior. Additionally, according to Khotari (2004), quantitative research is applicable to phenomena that can be described in terms of quantity because it is based on the measurement of quantity or amount.

He employed the triangulation process since the research integrated a qualitative and quantitative approach. Methodological triangulation is the use of various methods to research the same subject, according to De Vos et al. (2005:362). In this study, both quantitative (a survey) and qualitative (interviews) methodologies were combined into a single investigation. According to Polit & Beck (2008:548), triangulation has the advantage of using a variety of approaches or viewpoints to gather and analyze facts about a phenomenon and come to a more accurate understanding of reality. The triangulation method offered the finest foundation for data collection for this study and was essential in removing bias.

4.5 Research approach

The first step in an inductive research strategy is to gather information related to the research issue. The researcher will take a break from data collecting once a sizable amount of data has been gathered, stepping back to gain a bird's eye view of the data. The aims of utilizing an inductive technique are to build clear relationships between the research objectives and the summary conclusions produced from the raw data and to develop theory. This is done by condensing voluminous and varied raw text material into a brief, summary format.

According to Gratton and Jones (2009), the deductive method is used to evaluate a preconceived theory, explanation, or hypothesis. This approach helps researchers test a hypothesis using current theories. Existing data is reviewed to confirm or deny the hypothesis in order to reach the study objectives (Gill and Johnson, 2010). Deductive research is a focused method of testing theories. It offers a means of elucidating the causal relationships between the theories and the variables. Additionally, this kind of research is typically finished sooner.

For this study, both deductive and inductive methods were used to draw conclusions about the business practices of the A2 beef SMEs with the goal of creating a new strategic entrepreneurial framework to boost beef production in Zimbabwe. Based on the study questions and established themes, the researcher utilized an inductive approach to make observations and look for patterns in the data from the decision tress used in the thematic analysis. The researcher was better able to understand the trends in the data thanks to the

inductive approach's focus on problems. The high degree of flexibility ingrained in the inductive research approach feature has greatly aided in the development of the research's extremely significant new theory.

To examine the generalizability of findings, the deductive technique was employed in coordination with the quantitative research methodology. In the course of doing the quantitative research, questionnaires were used. The association between SMEs' performance in the beef sector and their strategic entrepreneurial mindset was measured and examined by the researcher (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The advantages of the deductive approach in explaining the causal linkages between the concepts and variables used in this study have made it a highly valuable tool for this research. Aspects like the relationship between the distance to the market and number of animals being taken to the market per annum and the number of years in business and the number of employees. Deductive approach has been useful in this research in measuring concepts quantitatively like the collaborative relationship amongst the A2 beef SMEs. The generalisation of the findings will made easy also through the application of the deductive approach to a certain extent

To examine the generalizability of findings, the deductive technique was employed in coordination with the quantitative research methodology. In the course of doing the quantitative research, questionnaires were used. The association between SMEs' performance in the beef sector and their strategic entrepreneurial mindset was measured and examined by the researcher (Saunders *et al*., 2009). The advantages of the deductive approach in explaining the causal linkages between the concepts and variables used in this study have made it a highly valuable tool for this research.

4.6 Research design

According to Mukherjee (2017:57), the plan for data collection, measurement, and analysis is the research design. An architectural design that serves as a plan, structure, and execution of the research to maximize the reliability of the findings, a research design can therefore be thought of as a road map or theoretical configuration of the research that specifies what must be done, where it is to be done, and by whom. It indicates the methods and approaches the researcher will employ in the research involving data collection, measurement, and analysis. It also includes a summary of the steps the researcher will take, starting with the formulation of the hypothesis and its practical implications all the way through to the data analysis at the end. It summarises that the research design must, at least, contain a clear statement of the research problem; procedures and techniques to be used for gathering information; the population to be studied; and methods to be used in processing and analysing data.

4.6.1 Sequential exploratory

The performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe's beef cattle ranching is the subject of this sequential exploratory study on the effects of the strategic entrepreneurial approach. According to Creswell (2009), a first phase of qualitative data collection and analysis is followed by a second phase of quantitative data collection and analysis that expands on the findings of the first phase of qualitative data collection. The dominance and sequence variables serve as the foundation for mixed methods research designs. According to Addae and Quan-Baffour (2015), dominance is when a researcher determines which of two approaches should be dominant in the study, which approach should be used more frequently than the other, and which approach will be applied in the study's initial stages and which one in its later phases. Dominance and sequencing are the two major tenets on which mixed methods research designs are built. According to Addae and Quan-Baffour (2015), dominance is when a researcher determines which of two approaches should be dominant in the study, which approach should be used more frequently than the other, and which approach will be applied in the study's initial stages and which one in its later phases. The following designs, as proposed by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), are applied in research investigations in accordance with the mixed research design approach:

1. The use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods at various stages of a study, when one methodology predominates over the other, is known as a dominant sequential mixed methods design. The following is a picture of this: **QUAN → qual or QUAL → quan or quan → QUAL or qual→ QUAN**
2. Comparable successive mixed approaches Design uses both quantitative and qualitative research techniques at various stages of a study, where both methodologies are given equal weight. i.e. QUAN → QUAN or QUAL → QUAN.
3. Predominant concurrent mixed techniques Design entails the simultaneous use of quantitative and qualitative research techniques in a single study, with one method taking precedence over the other, that is QUAN + qual or QUAL + quan.
4. Comparable concurrent mixed approaches When conducting a study, design entails combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques, with one method taking precedence over the other. i.e., QUAN + QUAL or QUAL + QUAN

The equal priority sequential exploratory mixed methods design, also known as QUAL → QUAN, is the methodology used in this study. A mixed-methods study design known as an exploratory sequential design

places the quantitative part of data collecting and analysis after the qualitative phase (Fetters *et al*., 2013:89). Since it was necessary to find qualitative themes to support the investigation, relevant variables were found following the qualitative phase of the study, which justifies the design's applicability. Participants were surveyed using this technique in the Zimbabwean province of Mashonaland West's Makonde and Zvimba districts. Since the exploratory study examines the "what" of the issue and helped to identify what additional research can be done regarding the effects of the strategic entrepreneurial approach and SME performance in the SME beef industry, this strategy addressed the research question (Rensburg, 2010:6). According to this perspective, the sequential exploratory approach is the most appropriate method for the study that aims to create a framework for strategic entrepreneurship to improve the performance of SMEs in the beef industry.

According to Creswell, the most common sequential exploratory strategy was split into two phases: the first focused on qualitative data gathering and interpretation, while the second was quantitative and built on the previous phase's knowledge (2009). This study was a great fit for the sequential exploratory technique because it addressed the "what" element of the research and provided opportunities for further research into the performance of SMEs (Rensburg, 2010). The sequential exploratory study is essentially divided into three stages of qualitative data collection and analysis, according to Creswell (2009), who also noted that the analysed data is used to develop data collection instruments for the second phase that will be used further to collect data in the third phase. To get a practical understanding of the strategic policies and their impacts on the performance of SMEs, in-depth interviews were employed in the first stage of the qualitative research. During in-depth interviews, the researcher sought out comments that went into great detail on the respondents' own experiences, emotions, and viewpoints (Lee, 2007). Using the information from phase one, the second step created a survey to assess the generalizability of the results. The researcher selected the most important results from the first phase and used them in the quantitative second step.

4.6.2 Cross sectional research design

Of terms of cross-sectional, longitudinal, or case-study research, the temporal dimension in the investigation dictates the appropriate research types. According to Gisela van Rensburg (2010), a longitudinal study is conducted over a longer time period while an across-sectional study is conducted at a single point in time and is non-recurrent in nature. According to Neuman (1997:29–30), longitudinal studies employ many units or cases to gather data before the researcher looks for certain trends. In other words, designated patterns across numerous units or cases are more the focus.

Due to the length of time involved, to administer the longitudinal technique was not used. A case study is in-depth research of the relationships between the variables that affect explanations or change, which are then examined. Case-study research should also be used to connect the micro level to the macro level, says Neuman (1997:300). The behavior of individuals is investigated at the micro level so that it can be applied to large-scale social structures and processes (macro level). This is incompatible with the study, which is focused on registered SMEs in Zimbabwe that raise beef cattle.

Consequently, this study's research design was cross-sectional. The layout enables the collecting of data at one time (Saunders, 2012). The cross-sectional design was chosen because it is more practical than other, pricy, and time-consuming alternatives. The strategy was chosen because it could accomplish the study's goals while also considering the limited time and financial resources available. Analysis and interpretation of the data allowed for the drawing of conclusions about the study's population at a certain moment. The cross-sectional survey, which included a survey of people who had actual experience with the subject under study, was also used, and the experience survey was also employed (Kothari, 2016:14).

4.7 Target population

To get a practical understanding of the strategic policies and their impacts on the performance of SMEs, in-depth interviews sought out comments that went into great detail on the respondents' own experiences, emotions, and viewpoints (Lee, 2007). Using the information from phase one, the second step created a survey to assess the generalizability of the results. The researcher selected the most important results from the first phase and used them in the quantitative second step. 3653 registered SME commercial beef cattle farmers in Zimbabwe received benefits from the FTLRP, according to the ministry of lands in Zimbabwe's quarterly report for 2018. The strategic entrepreneurial model will particularly assist these beef SMEs, which are dispersed throughout the nation in the various districts of the country. In the Makonde and Zvimba areas of Mashonaland West province, this study focused on beef A2 beef SMEs.

4.7.1 Sampling techniques.

The two techniques utilized in research are probability sampling and non-probability sampling. According to Rensburg (2010:27), probability sampling guarantees that each component of the population has an equal chance of being chosen for the sample (Rensburg, 2010:4). When every component of the population has an equal and independent probability of being chosen for the sample, random selection is taking place (De Vos et al., 2005:196). Simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling, and cluster sampling are the most popular probability sampling methods.

Figure 4.3: Probability sampling techniques

Sampling Method	Explanation
Simple random sampling	It is selected by assigning a number to each member in the population list and then a random number table is used to draw out the members of the sample.
Systematic random sampling	Each member of the study population is either assembled or listed, a random start is designated, then members of the population are selected at equal intervals
Stratified random sampling	Each member of the study population is assigned to a group or stratum, then a simple random sample is selected from each stratum
Cluster sampling	Each member of the study population is assigned to a group or cluster, then clusters are selected at random and all member so for selected cluster are included in the sample

Non-probability sampling doesn't provide elements an equal chance of selection. It does not offer a situation in which every member of the population has a chance to be chosen. 233) (Saunders et al. According to (Latham, 2007:5), non-probability sampling is used by researchers to compile samples for little or no cost and/or for research investigations where representativeness of the population is not necessary. A non-probability approach is a subjective process in which it is impossible to calculate the likelihood of choosing participants from the population (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:11). Techniques other than random sampling include judgment, quota, and convenience sampling (Salkind 2010:19).

The table 4.4 below gives detail on non-probability sampling techniques.

Table 4.4: Nonprobability sampling

Sampling Method	Explanation
Convenience	Convenience sampling includes participants who are readily available and agree to participate in a study
Purposive/ Judgemental	selecting a sample "based on your own knowledge of the population, its elements, and the nature of your research aims
Quota	Interviewers select a sample that yields the same proportions as the population proportions on easily identified variables.
Snowball	used "in those rare cases when the population of interest cannot be identified other than by someone who knows that a certain person has the necessary experience or characteristics to be included

Non probability sampling Latham (2007)

4.7.2 Sample

The Zvimba and Makonde districts, respectively, have 149 and 162 SME beef cattle ranchers, according to the Zimbabwe Central Statistical Office (2018). 311 beef cattle SMEs made up the sample for this study. Due to the abundance of agricultural activities in the Zvimba and Makonde areas of Mashonaland West Province, A2 beef cattle SMEs there were chosen as the research population sample. Additionally, the raising of cattle for the beef and dairy industries is quite active.

The sample for this study included all the known A2 SME beef cattle farmers in Zvimba and Makonde districts in Mashonaland West province in Zimbabwe, totaling 149 and 162 A2 SME beef cattle farmers in Zvimba and Makonde districts, respectively. This was done because it was impossible to collect data from all the beef SMEs in Zimbabwe due to time and access constraints (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

Of the 311 A2 beef SMEs, 171 were accessible and participated in the survey. From within that 171 beef SMEs, 15 became participants in the qualitative part of the research while the whole 171 participated in the quantitative phase, including those that were involved in the qualitative phase.

4.8 Sampling techniques used in this study

From the plethora of sampling techniques available, this research used the techniques presented hereunder as seen fit to resonate with the requirements in this study.

4.8.1 Deliberate and convenience sampling

In phase one of this investigation, deliberate sampling, often referred to as purposive non-probability sampling and convenience sampling, was employed. Purposive sampling's major objective is to concentrate on a population's characteristics. This aided in answering the study's major and secondary questions as well as its goals (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). In a convenience sample, a non-probability sampling technique, the sample is drawn from a group of persons who are simple to get in touch with or locate.

4.8.2 Applicability in qualitative data collection.

This type of sampling is also known as grab sampling or availability sampling and was also applicable during the first qualitative phase. The rationale for this approach being the researcher was looking for people knowledgeable about this subject of the research and being available and agree to partake in the interview process. There was need to extract as much relevant data as possible from the interviewees to enrich the research and give it substance. Purposive sampling was the best method for this study because it allowed the researcher to find participants who were educated about rich data sources and able to clarify and explain difficult concerns (Babie, 2005). In Zimbabwe's Mashonaland West region, 7 of the 15 participants came from the Makonde area and 8 from the Zvimba district. The researcher had assistance from the provincial lands and agriculture ministry officials to get access to the right and relevant participants for the interviews.

4.8.3 Applicability in quantitative data collection

There are 149 and 162 A2 SME beef cattle farmers in Zvimba and Makonde districts, respectively, making a total of 311 A2 beef cattle SMEs. Of the 311 A2 beef SMEs, 171 accessible and participated in the survey.

A2 beef farmers are so geographically spaced in Makonde and Zvimba districts hence it was going to be very costly both in terms of time and economically to reach out to them. Also, with this data collection happening at the peak of covid 19 pandemic, restrictions thereon would not permit the researcher to have that freewill and easy access to the places at his own convenient times. In mitigating against this, the researcher had to engage the services of veterinary officers, Ministry of lands and agriculture and the Agri bank to help in distributing questionnaires to the registered A2 beef SMEs who are in the records as they visited the offices for various reasons. The filled forms would be confidentially placed in a locked boxes through a perforation

made for that purpose to ensure privacy and confidentiality. Only the researcher had access to the filled forms upon unlocking the boxes. The researcher also had access to the community leaders in these farming areas who also assisted him in reaching out to some of the A2 SMEs during community meetings. The researcher would reach out to any A2 beef SME member accessible.

4.8 Data collection strategies

A combination of both qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies was used, in consistence with the mixed methods approach being adopted for this study. Brislin (1986:143)highlights the importance and relevance of research instruments to any study. Arafat *et al.* (2016:129) subscribes to the argument that research instruments should suffice to a study and results there from must be an analysis able to produce the needed results with accuracy. Bryman (2015)accepts that questionnaires are easy to administer and provide data that can easily be quantified and analysed. The interactive methods were used for collecting data and they involve the subjects (Lee, 2007) through in-depth interviews and questionnaires.

4.9 Administration of Research Instrument – (Interview and Questionnaire)

Phase one of the qualitative study's participants were contacted by phone and sent emails inviting them to participate in interviews. The interview subjects were made aware of the interviews in time for them to be ready. The interview places were properly sanitised and wellcleaned in advance with a health inspector also visiting the place beforehand to inspect the interview space and ensure that the WHO guidelines were followed.

The goal of the questionnaire distribution was to specifically target the respondents through various methods, such as email and personal contact with the researcher or research assistants. The researcher made prior arrangements with the contact people in each district so that the his visits would coincide with their meetings where they congregate in numbers before traveling to the two districts in the Mashonaland West region of Zimbabwe. Farming SME operators occasionally hold meetings at set locations and times, sometimes even in urban areas, making it simple to communicate with them and administer questionnaires to them. The use of a private vehicle assured that no time was lost and that the surveys were safe and secure. The researcher allotted two weeks for the administration of the questionnaires.

Some of the questions were sent electronically via emails, and in cases where COVID 19 restrictions were upheld, research assistants handed out the forms in person. A participant letter that addressed ethical concerns such as participant confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity was included with each questionnaire. Instructions on how to fill out the questionnaire and submit the completed questionnaire were also included

in the mail. As a result, participants had two options for submitting the questionnaire when it was completed: electronically or in a special box. The questionnaire was then gathered by the researcher. All participants received an email with a reminder to finish the survey. Participants had the option to leave the meeting at any time, therefore this was done courteously without coercing them.

The participants were involved in accordance with World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, conscious of the COVID 19 pandemic emergency that had adversely impacted our daily routines. The following WHO guidelines were followed (World Health Organization, 2020):

•Wearing masks is a constant practice that is a crucial component of a comprehensive set of COVID-19 preventative and control methods.

• Keep a minimum physical distance of one meter (3.3 feet) from people, especially those who are experiencing respiratory symptoms (e.g., coughing, sneezing).

• Regularly washing hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand massage if they are not obviously unclean.

• Practice respiratory hygiene, which entails covering mouths and nose while coughing or sneezing with a bent elbow or a paper tissue, throwing the tissue away right away after usage, and washing their hands.

Throughout the process of giving out the questionnaires and conducting the interviews, the researcher followed these rules. He also purchased Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to stop the COVID 19 virus from spreading. In order to help uphold WHO requirements while collecting data, sanitizers, masks, and liquid soap were also acquired. Qualified health staff were also hired. The interview rooms' health requirements were upheld by the medical staff, and all the data collection equipment was sanitized.

4.9.1 Interview

The interview guide served as a data collection tool for the initial phase, instructing the researcher on how to conduct the discussions and interviews, respectively. In order to get comprehensive data from the participants, who are A2 beef cattle entrepreneurs, an interview guide was used in this study. Leading questions were included in the interview guide to assist the interviewer in keeping track of the conversation and maintaining concentration. A short-question interview guide makes thorough discussion and data collection from the informants easier. Through multiple pilot studies of the entire process with professionals in the field of research, the researcher practiced the entire procedure. A fast review of the interview procedure

that emerges naturally as it is practiced was supplied by the interview guide (Lee, 2007). The participants' permission was requested to use the recording devices, and in cases where they declined, thorough notes were taken, and a narrative report was created shortly after the interview.

4.9.2 Documentary search

To determine if there are any discrepancies between what should prevail and what is actually prevailing, reviews of beef cattle farming management methods were conducted and compared with what is occurring. An expert in animal science provided aid for this task. This process was aided by a Doctor Chihobo, who also happens to be a lecturer at the university in Zimbabwe where the researcher is from. Technical and other concerns were helped with by Doctor Ngondonga, the regional veterinary officer for Mashonaland West, and his staff.

4.10 Measures of trustworthiness in qualitative research

If qualitative researchers want the reader to believe that the data analysis was performed in a precise, consistent, and thorough manner, they must document, systematize, and disclose the techniques of collection and analysis in sufficient detail to allow the reader to judge the process' credibility (Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules, 2010). (2017).

4.10.1 Credibility and validity

According to Macnee and McCabe (2008), the researcher will spend a lot of time with the participants to get to know them well and help them understand what the researcher is trying to accomplish. The researcher will also build rapport and trust with the participants in order to prevent information distortions that could be brought on by the presence of a stranger. The extended period of time will aid the researcher in identifying and removing study components that might jeopardize the accuracy of the data.

In qualitative research, validity refers to whether the study's conclusions are true and certain in the sense that they accurately reflect the situation and are backed by the available data, respectively (Patton,2002). According to Mangan *et al* (2004), triangulation is a technique employed by qualitative researchers to validate their findings by examining a study subject from various angles. Data, investigator, theory, methodological, and environmental triangulations are only a few examples of the numerous sorts of triangulations.

In this study, data and investigator triangulation was used. Patton (2002) posits that data triangulation involves using different sources of information in order to increase the validity of a study. In addition, the researcher used colleagues not in the same field of study to also collect data in certain sampled parts of the

research area and asked the same questions to the participants in different ways and the outcomes were almost congruent, leading to the same conclusions.

Investigator triangulation analysis was also used, which involves including the viewpoint of a second, independent party in the analytic process. When the results were compared, the conclusions were reached with the same precision, increasing the degree of confidence. In a nutshell, triangulation—also known as "crystallization"—was being employed when different sources of data were to be used to produce complementary evidence (Richardson, 1991).

4.10.2 Dependability

Dependability guarantees that the research results are reliable and repeatable. The standard of the research's execution, analysis, and presentation serves as a gauge for this. Each step of the research method was described in detail so that a subsequent study may produce the same outcomes.

To be able to address the dependability issue, the processes in the study were exhaustively executed with full details of how things were done. Research practice was articulately followed to the extent that if similar research is repeated the same results can be obtainable. To ensure dependability, the researcher clearly articulated the research design which he followed religiously during the research process itself.

4.10.3 Confirmability

Confirmability examines the extent to which the data gathered provide evidence for the research conclusions. It determines if the researcher was prejudiced during the research (Mangan *et al*., 2004; Clarke, 2005). Additionally, the act of confirmability relates to how much researchers try to remain objective and that they acted honestly while restricting their own ideals and biases (Bryman & Bell, 2011:398).

In this study, the researcher had the methodology clearly outlined, which was ratified as workable and authentic by the Northwest University higher degrees committee after the researcher successfully defended it at a methodology colloquium. During this research, an audit trail was used which the researcher religiously followed with every stage being recorded for authentication and verification by anyone interested and to demonstrate how each decision was arrived at. Through the use of three different data collection techniques, bias was also removed, as was the researcher's awareness of his own interests and their absence from the research process. Since it is challenging to totally eradicate bias in a natural environment, the researcher relied on the operation strategy, scientific analysis, and interpretation of the data to keep him focused on the neutral path and uphold academic norms.

Makonde and Zvimba areas of Mashonaland west province are a mixture of people from different cultural, religious orientations who finally settled there as a result the resettlement program. During the research, the researcher continued to respect the humanity differences in culture, religion, norms, values, dressing, and language ensuring that such diversity would not negatively impact the research operations and subsequently results.

4.10. 4 Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research is likened to generalisability, or external validity, in the quantitative research space (Ritchie *et al.,* 2013:6). It generalizes study findings and attempts to apply them to other situations and contexts. Researchers cannot prove definitively that outcomes based on the interpretation of the data are transferable, but they can establish that it is likely.

The qualitative research undertaken in this study enhanced transferability by clearly articulating the research strategies, settings, and assumptions underpinning the study Madill *et al*., (2018:4). According to the researcher, transferability is achieved through the provision of a detailed**,** rich description of the phenomenon studied to provide the reader with adequate data to be enable him/her to pass judgment on the relevance of the discoveries (German *et al*., 2015:18). Since this study partly adopts qualitative phenomenology study approach, the process of generalisation that relevantly coordinates it is inferential generalisation, which is best clarified as generalisation from the context of the research study itself to different settings or context (Ritchie *et al*., 2013:6). In this regard, the researcher documented and legitimised the methodological approach, and showed, in detail the basic procedures and systems that have helped build, shape and interface implications related with those phenomena.

Throughout the whole study, the researcher was sensitive to conceivable inclinations by being vigilant to and aware of the potential outcomes for various elucidations of the real world. Furthermore, the researcher was fully alert to the fact that in qualitative research, generalisability is sometimes easily disregarded for advancing the local comprehension of circumstances. It is important to note that the researcher gave a rich and thick portrayal of the study. This has led to the situation that information and depiction represent themselves to empower readers to assess the importance of the implications attached to the findings. This, however, enables them to make their own judgment regarding the transferability of the exploration results (Ritchie *et al.,* 2013:8).

Also, the application of the purposive sampling, a form of nonprobability sampling which the researcher used works very well in maximising specific data relative to the context in which it was collected. The fact

that researcher was partly targeting people with some considerable knowledge of the beef cattle SMEs operationality ensured that the outcomes would be largely aligned towards answering the research questions hence the transferability aspect becomes enhanced. Resultantly, the generalisability issue can be resolved by the reader of the research document in consideration of the view of how close the researcher's and the reader's contexts are. It has a lot to do with judgment of the context and phenomena found thereby allowing others to assess the transferability of the findings to another setting (Ritchie et al., 2013:8).

4.10.5 Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which data collection techniques and analysis procedures will yield consistent findings (Saunders *et al.*,2009). According to Beck *et al*.(1994:35) reliability denotes the degree the procedures undertaken are minimum to error and are most likely to yield the same results. In a nutshell, reliability speaks to the extent to which measurements are repeatable when different persons perform the measurements, on different occasions, under different conditions, with supposedly alternative instruments which measure the same thing (Drost, 2011:106) . Alison Heale and Robert Twycross (2015: 68)view reliability as a primary concern of the measure of quality in a quantitative study.

A thorough explanation of the research procedures utilized in this study, together with the key resources used to collect empirical data, have been created to ensure reliability. Additionally, the researcher has been able to assess the consistency of the participants' responses thanks to the triangulation of data gathering procedures through the mixed methods methodology. Additionally, the researcher was able to pose related questions in a different way thanks to the usage of both closed-ended and open-ended questions.

4.11 Quantitative data collection

If quantitative researchers want the reader to believe that the data collection and analysis was done accurately, consistently, and completely, they must document, systematize, and disclose the techniques of analysis in enough detail to allow the reader to determine the credibility of the process (Kielhofner and Coster, 2017:274).

4.11.1 Questionnaires

Finding out how the internal and external business environments affect SMEs in Zimbabwe's beef cattle ranching industry is one of the goals of this study. The respondents were surveyed in order to gather information. The core of any survey activity is a questionnaire (Khotari, 2010). Respondents filled out questionnaires that the researcher administered in order to collect responses to the questions she had posed.

The researcher used contact points such the veterinary offices of the ministry of lands, which the as beef SMEs occasionally visit for various requirements. After making prior arrangements with the contacts in each district, the researcher visited the two districts in Zimbabwe. Most beef cattle SMEs in A2 entrepreneurs are stationed in urban areas where they have professional positions in other industries, making it simple to communicate with them and administer surveys to them. In order to prevent any delays and to guarantee the security and safety of the questionnaires, the researcher allotted enough time for the administration of the questionnaires and the use of a private vehicle. The researcher and two additional hired research assistants physically handed out the questionnaires to the respondents before distributing, monitoring, and collecting them.

The questionnaire has consisted of several sections covering aspects of demographic data, service experience from the relevant stakeholders and supply chain fundamentals. There is will a section with open ended questions to allow respondents to fully express themselves. These sections were used to capture both qualitative and quantitative data.

4.11.2 Reliability and Validity in a quantitative Study

According to Terwee (2016:4), it is generally agreed that test-retest reliability of a questionnaire should be evaluated by giving the same group of respondents the questionnaire twice. This is accomplished utilizing a time frame during which it is presumptive that the subjects' attitudes toward the construct of interest won't change. To assess their dependability, the research's questionnaires were tested and retested on shadow participants. According to Surucu et al. (2020:2696), the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure is what determines its validity (i.e., content validity, concurrent validity, and construct validity). According to Oluwatayo (2012:14), the validity of quantitative research determines if the research measures the variables it was designed to. It also gauges the degree to which the research findings are accurate. Terwee (2016:6) makes a reference to the fact that a research instrument's validity enables one to hit "the bull's eye" of their study object. By posing several questions, researchers can determine the validity of their work. They frequently look to other scholars' study for the answers. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, the researcher has guaranteed the aforementioned factors.

Johnson (2007: 283), argued that if the validity or trustworthiness can be increased or tested, this readily leads to results that are more believable and authentic, which may then be generalized. In order to ensure validity, the researcher made sure that the qualitative questions were reproduced on the quantitative

research, but in a different way. According to Rensburg (2010:36), if a study of a similar nature is conducted abroad, the same measuring device should be used. This study tested the validity of its findings using the triangulation approach. Triangulation, according to Golafsnani (2003:41), is frequently a tactic (test) for enhancing the validity and reliability of research or the assessment of findings.

4.11.3 Dependent variable

Sales growth and perceived non-financial success were the two-performance metrics employed in this study. Sales growth is a recognized and commonly used performance metric in SME research, according to Delmar et al. (2003) and Wales et al. (2011b). When earnings are not indicative, estimations of firm growth are enabled by sales growth (ibid, 2011). Archival financial data on the SMEs' sales volume over a five-year period were used in the study. A percentage increase in sales volume is used to calculate sales growth. The primary performance metric for this study is sales growth.

Non-financial performance involves studies that apply satisfaction and goal attainment. The likes of Covin and Slevin (1989) assessed firm performance through the use of subjective perceptions of respondents regarding the importance of varying performance indicators and the relevant level of satisfactions as suggested by the same indicators. Such index is calculated by multiplying the level of satisfaction of top management of the firm with several main financial performance criteria by the degree of importance the researcher will assign to each of these financial criteria. The financial performance metrics would be assessed in line with the following variables: profitability, sales volume, profit to sales ratio, and market share. The questions to be asked in order to gauge satisfaction levels and the weight of various aspects would then be developed.

4.11.4 Independent variable

The independent variables include Entrepreneurial Orientation based on Covin and Slevin scale (1989), with the entrepreneurial values, representing the exploration component of the concept; investments in internal resources, knowledge-based resources, organisational learning, developmental and transitional changes forming the exploitation component.

4.11.5 Control variable

Control variables include the age of the SME organisation, its size and geographical region.

4.11.6 Pilot study

A pilot study can be defined as a small study to test research protocols, data collection instruments, sample recruitment strategies, and other research techniques in preparation for a larger study (Abu *et al*., 2006). In

his research on the importance of a pilot study (Abu *et al*., 2006) highlights that a pilot study aims to identify potential problem areas and deficiencies in the research instruments and protocol prior to implementation during the full study. Edwin R. van Teijlingen and Vanora Hundley (1998:3) emphasis that the pilot study helps the research team to familiarise with procedures decides between study methods. Ibidi (1998:3) also define a pilot study as a feasibility study that assesses the feasibility of the proposed data processing frameworks, processes and procedures.

For the purpose of this study, a pilot study was done in Chinhoyi with 10 people. Chinhoyi is the capital for Mashonaland West. It is in this town that most A2 beef cattle farmers who do not permanently reside at farms reside and manage their beef projects from and are readily accessible. The pilot study assisted in matching the instruments to the expected participants. This mini research also assisted in forecasting expected costs for accessing research subjects and accessing procedures. The pilot study also assisted in assessing data mining, processing and presentation procedure to evaluate the usefulness of the procedures to followed.

4.11.7 Data analysis

The process of data analysis involved structuring and bringing logical order to the vast volume of data collected. The data was first transcribed from the audio machines onto interview's sheets and computer. Transcribing and analysing the recorded discussions were conducted with the help of qualitative data processing software.

Content analysis was used to analyse data. Content-analysis consists of analysing the contents of documentary materials such as books, magazines, newspapers, and the contents of all other verbal materials which can be either spoken or printed (Khotari, 2004). The collected data was then categorised on a computer and, using the content method and sub-themes were obtained (Marmara, 2016:8).

The quantitative phase of the research enabled the researcher to collect data using questionnaires and convert the data into numerical form so that statistical analyses can be made, and conclusions drawn. Completed questionnaires will be edited to guarantee accuracy and consistency of data with the questions intentions. The questions in the research instrument will then be coded followed by processing and analysis of data using a statistical program, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 21). The results will be presented in frequency tables, pie charts and bar charts. Regression analysis will be used in this study to evaluate the strength of the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables.

4.11.8 Tests used in the analysis

The data obtained was presented in tabular and graphical form of tables and further analysed using a variety of tests. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics and this being inclusive of standard deviations and means. Descriptive statistics summarise the sample under study albeit minus the drawing of any inferences based on probability theory. It helps in producing a summary of data in the form of simple quantitative measures such as percentages or means or in the form of visual summaries in the form of histograms and box plots (Kaliyadan & Kulkarni 2019:7). Prevalent are three main types of descriptive statistics: Frequency measures (frequency, percent), central tendency measures (mean, median and mode), and dispersion measures or variation (variance, standard deviation, standard error, quartile, interquartile range, percentile, range, and coefficient of variation (CV) provide simplified summaries about the sample and the measures (Mishra *et al*. 2019:21).

Descriptive statistics was utilised to explain a single variable (univariate analysis) or more than one variable (bivariate/multivariate analysis). In the case of more than one variable, descriptive statistics was then applied to summarize relationships between variables using scatter plots (Kaliyadan & Kulkarni 2019:7). Frequencies were presented in tables and graphs. Used is also the Chi-square goodness-of-fit-test, Regression analysis, Binomial test, Pearson's and Spearman's correlation and One sample t-test: A suitable analysis test was selected for appropriate questions that were used for collecting data.

4.11.9 Elimination of bias

The degree to which researchers try to maintain objectivity and that they operated in good faith while restricting personal values and prejudices is referred to as confirmability (Bryman and Bell, 2011: 398). As stated earlier, confirmability is "the extent to which the findings are a product entirely of the informants and conditions of the investigation and not of other biases, motivations, and viewpoints," according to Krefting (1991: 216). According to Shenton (2004:72), who holds the same opinion, researchers should make sure that their findings reflect the experiences and viewpoints of the respondents rather than their own goals and objectives.

Given the foregoing, bias was minimized using three different methods for gathering data, the researcher's awareness of personal interests and preference for one research method over another, and a continued respect for the diversity of human culture, religion, norms, values, dress, and language. It was challenging to entirely eradicate bias in a natural environment, so the researcher continued to follow the operation plan.

Scientific analysis and interpretation of the results also helped him stay on the correct track toward objectivity and uphold academic norms.

4.12 Ethical consideration

In order to preserve the participants' human dignity, researchers must adhere to certain professional norms known as ethics (Mouton, 2001). The Northwest University Research Ethics Code for Research Involving Human Participants was followed in this study. The authorization to conduct research from the pertinent local leaders in the locations being examined was the second ethical problem considered.

Since the nature of this study was intrusive and involved looking into people's private lives, confidentiality was preserved without exception. Since it is based on interactions and closeness between the researcher and the researched, qualitative research is more susceptible to ethical mistakes than quantitative research (Orb *et al.,* 2001). The researcher avoided participating in any political activities since he was fully aware of the political nature of FTLRP in Zimbabwe. The previous president of the nation, who also happens to be the principal architect of the FTLRP, hails from the Zvimba district, one of the research regions. That would imply that the political climate in the area would likely be very tense. The researcher exercised extreme caution in all of his transactions, yet he did not compromise the goals and objectives of the study. The researcher respects the individual's freedom to refuse participation or, after giving their consent, to withdraw it at any time without consequence. Participants in the study were required to provide informed, voluntary permission before proceeding. The researcher also gave details about the project's goals and ramifications, the requirements for involvement, and any other factors that might reasonably be anticipated to affect participants' willingness to engage. This information was given in comprehensible language. This Chapter four of this study will be summarized in the paragraph after this.

4.13 Chapter summary

This chapter concentrated on the research technique and examined the research's guiding principles, paradigm, and design. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected using the sequential exploratory methodology. The functions of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were combined in the research process. This strategy ensured that the research would benefit from a comparative advantage from the two data gathering methods since the weaknesses of one method would be mitigated by the strengths of the other. While a quantitative technique was used to collect data to explain the correlations between variables, a qualitative approach was utilized to gain subjective information about the topic. The two

methodologies were used to drive the collection, presentation, and analysis of the data. This resulted in balanced data results and more insightful conclusions.

In accordance with the mixed method approach, the target population, sampling kinds and methodologies, as well as sample size determination, were discussed. The data gathering process was divided into two stages, with the first stage using qualitative (interviews) and the second stage using quantitative (survey) tools. The use of tools, their validity, confirmability, and administration—as well as the associated ethical procedures—were all covered. According to Saunders et al. (2009:34), the stages of the research process comprise philosophy, methodological choice, strategy, and techniques and procedures. These stages were involved in the researcher's strategy.

CHAPTER 5
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research methodology employed in the study was discussed. Since the mixed methods paradigm guided the study design, a quantitative-qualitative triangulation discourse guided the presentation and discussion of the study. The findings are sequentially arranged and presented along the four objectives which were to: (i) establish the extent to which an entrepreneurial culture exists in SME beef cattle production; (ii) establish the impact of government policy framework on the performance of Zimbabwe's SME sector; (iii) determine government's technical support to the SMEs beef cattle sector; and (iv) develop a framework for increasing beef production for Small and Medium Enterprises

5.2 Response Rate

A total of 15 interviewees and 179 out of 230 questionnaire respondents took part in the study. A total of 171 valid surveys were available for analysis after the data cleaning process removed eight (8) questionnaires that were either spoilt or had inaccurate answers. The following Table 5.1 provides an illustration of the whole response rate computation.

Table 5.1: Interview participants (Qualitative) and survey response

STAKEHOLDER	**DISTRICT**	**SAMPLE SIZE TOTAL**	**INSTRUMENT**	**UNACCOUNTED FOR and DISCARDED**	**NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS**	**RESPONSE RATE %**
A2 Beef SMEs	Makonde	7	Interview guide	0	7	100
A2 Beef SMEs	Zvimba	8	Interview guide	0	8	100
Totals		**15**		**0**	**15**	**100**
Survey response (Quantitative)						
DISTRICT		**SAMPLE**	**ACTUAL RESPONDENTS**		**NET %**	
Makonde		124	91		73.38	
Zvimba		106	80		75.47	
Totals		**230**	**171**		**74.35**	
Response rate (Overall)		**(74.35%+100%)/2**			**87.19**	

The entire response rate was 87.19%, and the literature in general (Johnson, Timothy, Owens, and Linda. (2013)) typically agrees that a response rate of more than 60% is favourable and that the research findings are taken seriously. Babbie (1990) stated that 60% is fine and above 70% is very good, and Stake (2005) hinted that at least 75% response rate is a genuine representative and appropriate response rate for any

research. The overall gross response rate of 87.19%, as shown in Table 5.1 above, clearly shows that this is within acceptable bounds and lends confidence to the study's quantitative and qualitative conclusions.

5.3 Participants' demographic information

Participants demographic information was collected in five categories in the form of designation, qualification, race, age and sex. According to Yilmaz *et al.* (2019:110), the researcher can analyze a population's potential to change its environment and its impact on global change in an increasingly uncertain world by knowing the demographic and other features of participants and responses. According to Lee and Schuele (2010:297), determining the sample's representativeness with respect to the target population requires an awareness of the demographic features of the respondent's variables, such as age, gender, qualifications, and designation. The age distribution dynamics in this study provide insight into how the population will change in the future and how that change will affect the growth of the beef industry for SMEs. The gender analysis provides a clearer understanding of how economic opportunities in a country, like the beef industry, are explored or distributed between men and women. Zimbabwe is a multiracial nation; therefore, the analysis of racial makeup reveals the degree of inclusion in A2 beef cattle SMEs. The analysis of academic credentials aids in determining the relationship between performance and qualifications.

Further analysis of the information per category is presented in proceeding sub-sections.

5.3.1 Gender distribution

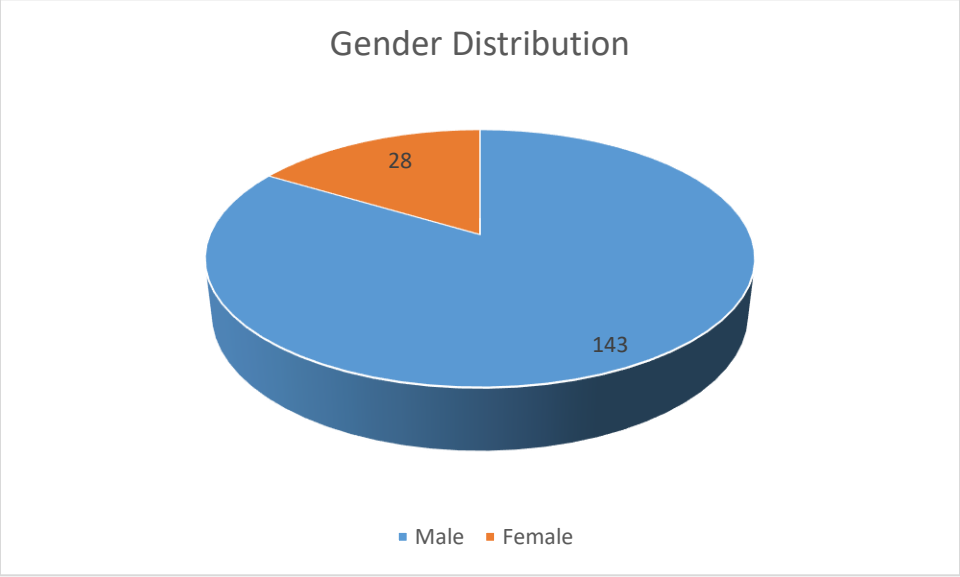

Figure 5.1 Gender distribution

As reflected in the pie chart above, men constituted the majority (143 = 83.6%) of the questionnaire respondents while women were only 28 (16.4%). Despite the importance of the beef cattle sector to the livelihood and economic emancipation in Zimbabwe, there is notable gender disparity in economic activity in that sector as women play second fiddle to their male counterparts. This has been perceived to be a result of partly lack of resources which prevent women from pursing their visions (Bennett *et al*, 2019:3; Bhatasara,2011).

Therefore, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (2006:12) offers programs that favour women's initiatives to reduce gender inequality, particularly for women who live in underdeveloped regions. This was backed up by McCaston and Rewald (2005:17), who claimed that gender inequality is one of the main factors perpetuating poverty and hunger in developing countries. Affirmative action programs for women should be provided by the new strategic entrepreneurial framework to overcome this imbalance, and the quota system will promote more involvement by women in SME programs (Ariffin *et al*., 2020:22-33).

5.3.2 Age distribution

Figure 5.2 displays the respondents' age distribution. The distribution of the age groupings shows which age group controls the beef SME market in Zimbabwe. When compared to the elderly population, it demonstrates how actively involved young people are in beef SME operations.

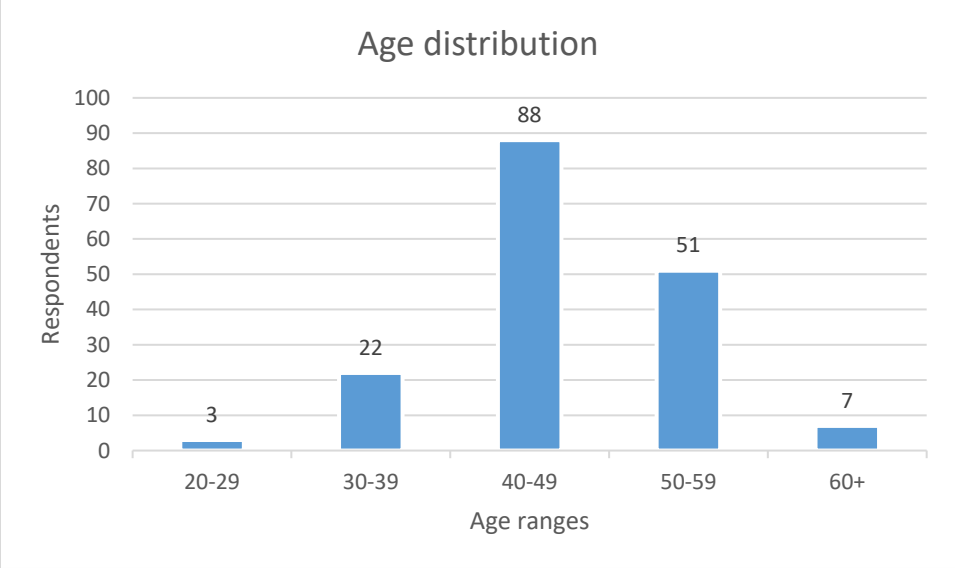

Figure 5.2 Age distribution

The Figure 5.2 above shows that most of the participants, 51.5% (88) are in the 40-49-year age group, and the following group being the 50-59-year age group, with 29.8% (51) of the respondents. Following these two age groups was the one of 30–39 years with 12.9% (22). The second least number of respondents were in the 60+ years' age group with a 12.9% (7) of the respondents and those who were 20-29 years, whose distributions were 1.8% (3) had the least respondents. The data shows that, with a cumulative value of 66% (113), the majority of respondents are under 50 years old, indicating that there is room for this industry's growth and sustainability given that the majority of entrepreneurs still have time on their side. The majority of the A2 beef SMEs included in this analysis also have other paying jobs, which supports the idea that most beef cattle SMEs view this as more of a hobby than a real enterprise.

According to Shonhe and Muchetu (2021:191), middle-aged unemployed people in Zimbabwe are turning to farming as a result of the country's persistent unemployment, and as a result, this tendency shows that this group hence dominates the research subjects.

5.3.3 Race distribution

The race aspect is dominated excessively by the black Zimbabweans at more than 98% of total as reflected in Figure 5.3 below, in line with the land reform policy thrust of empowering the previously disadvantage black majority population.

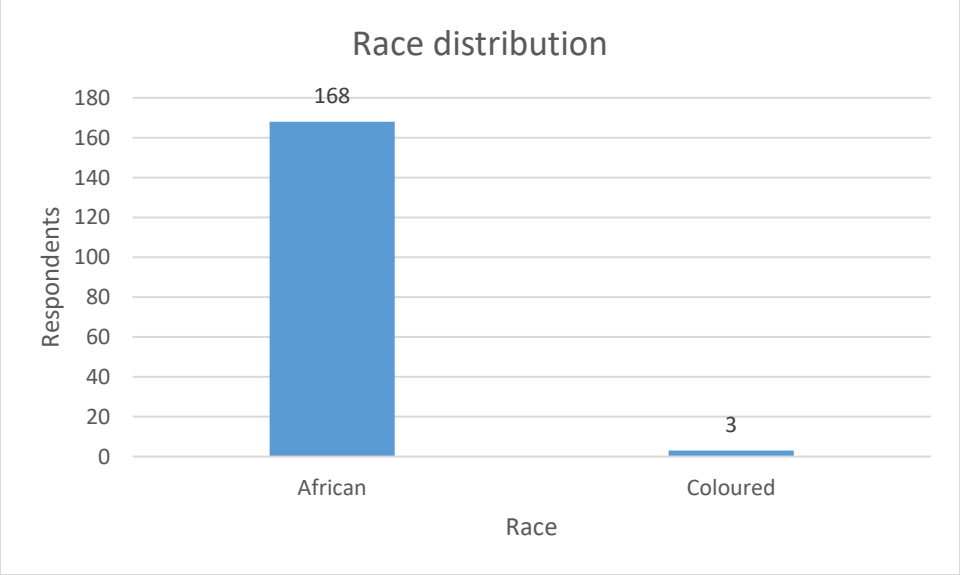

Figure 5.3 Race distribution

Most of the SME operators are of the African race with a response of 98.24% (168) and the remaining 1.76% (3) are coloured. Conclusively, the African race dominate the A2 beef SMEs. The African race dominance is a scenario widely expected to be prevalent because most of the Zimbabweans are generally black and hence make the majority of the A2 land redistribution program beneficiaries (Matondi, 2012:11). As part of the reasons for whole land reform program, the government intended to empower most of the citizens previously left from the whole land ownership scenario (Musodza, 2015), and most of the population researched is largely made up of respondents of the black race (98.24%) culminating into the whole 100% since the remaining 1.76% is made up of coloured people of African descent.

5.3.4 Qualifications distribution

A demographic analysis in terms of the qualifications analysis was meant to give a picture of the relationship between performance and qualifications. There is clearly no positive correlation between the owners' qualifications and experience and between performance and years in business.

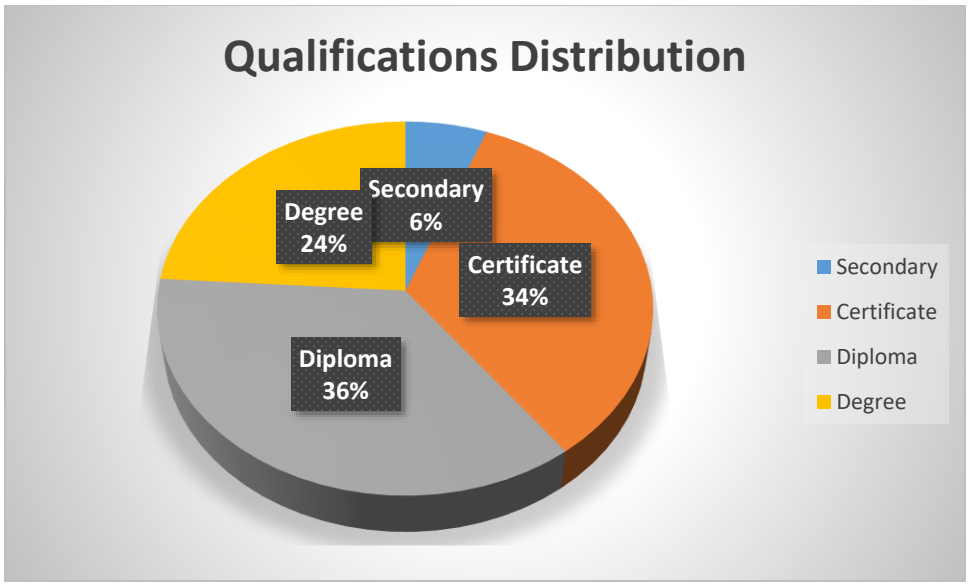

Figure 5.4 Qualifications distribution

The distribution of respondents with the greatest level of education is shown in the figure, with respondents with a diploma accounting for 36% (62) of the total respondents, closely followed by respondents with a certificate, who accounted for 34% (58) of the total respondents. 24% (41 respondents) of the respondents had degrees in their fields of study, whereas 6% just had high school diplomas (10). The data reveals that 94% (161) of the respondents had a tertiary degree, including all respondents. This distribution of data indicates a 100% literacy rate. These findings support those of Majoni et al. (2016), who suggested that Zimbabwe has one of the highest rates of literacy in Africa.

Through creativity, innovation, and scientific management of the enterprises, the Zimbabwean government may utilise the high literacy rate to enhance the abilities and capacity of the A2 beef SME implementers and transform the industry into a viable economic hub. This resonates with assertion by (Makoka & Masibo, 2015:1-10), that Zimbabwe has a very high literacy rate as compared to other African countries. The reflection given in terms of qualifications of the A2 beef SMEs indicates that generally the A2 beef SMEs are literate and educated enough to comprehend and practice minimum managerial activities to sustainably manage their operations. All other variables being constant, the A2 beef SME operations should be performing way above average owing to the levels of intellectual properly therein. This is in line with the assertion by Erisher, (2013:1-5) that Zimbabwe tertiary institutions are robust and enhancing hence that knowledge being imparted on the people should be critical mass to the enhancement of beef cattle SMEs performance.

Interestingly, advanced education beyond the bachelor's degree did not help but was negatively related to performance. The best way to learn about making a company successful is to work in, or better to run a new firm. Time spent in new ventures is dramatically more valuable than time spent in school or large firms. Therefore, beef SMEs must be seen emphasizing practical exposure entrepreneurial experience in their operations.

5.3.5 Relationship between qualification and knowledge skills

Understanding the relationship between operator qualifications for beef SME operators and knowledge and skills required for the work being done in the beef SME business is part of the process of gathering demographic data. The major objective of this demographic component was to see whether it had any bearing on certain of the questionnaire-covered factors. Figure 5.5 below illustrates the distribution of the respondents who ascertained that their qualifications equipped them with the adequate knowledge and skills for the work they are doing and those who indicated that there is no link at all between qualification and their organisational work.

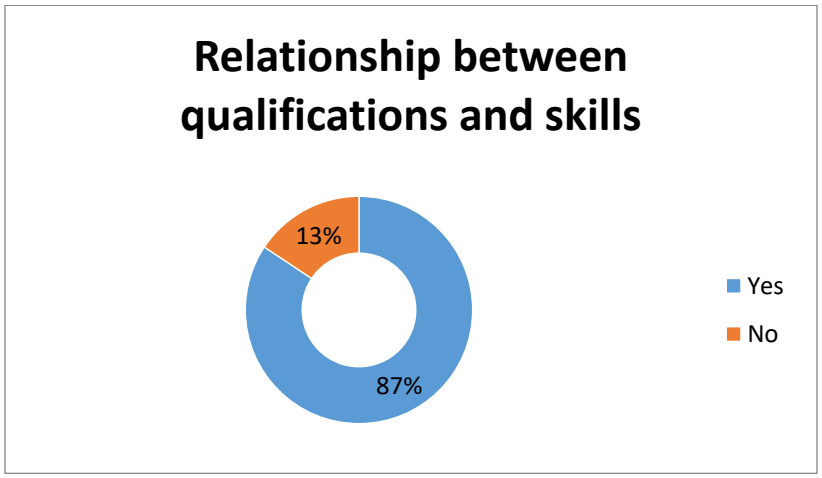

Figure 5.5 Relationship between qualifications and skills

5.3.6 Designations in the organisation

As part of further exploration of the demographic data, it was imperative to understand the designation of the SME operator in the organisation as this would reveal whether the owners or employees are the main business operators. Figure 5.6 below illustrates the distribution of the respondents by designation in their respective organisations. Most SMEs in general in Zimbabwe, including A2 beef SMEs, are generally

perceived to be owner managed. Owners are the buffer for knowledge of the goings and are the ones that make decisions that have the potential to make or break their organisations.

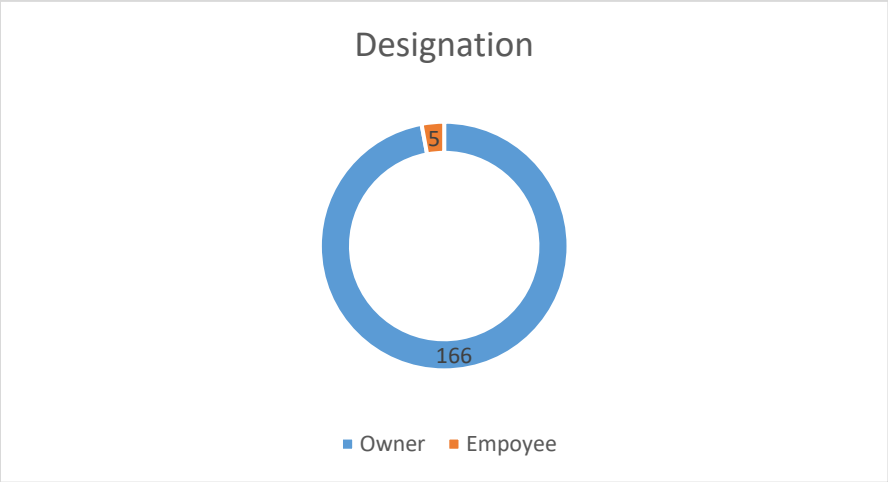

Figure 5.5 Designation

The Figure above is reflective of the fact that most of the respondents, 97% (166) are the owners of the operations. The data being collected came from the primary source and the owners of the operations who have a rich experience of beef cattle ranching.

5.3.7 Participants' other attributes

To cement findings of this research, it was seen fit to make further analysis focusing on other operational aspects to see if the overall performance of beef SMEs could have any relationship to those variables.

Scholars have established the importance of a market orientation, adequacy, experience and loyalty of employees, entrepreneurship, innovativeness, organizational learning, farm size and a cost focus as drivers of firm performance and how it contributes to a positional advantage within the context of agricultural SMEs. Empirically, measurement and test of the construct of positional advantage and examination of the relationship between positional advantage and firm performance has been done in other research works. Results have indicated that these variables are first-order indicators of positional advantage and are positively related to firm performance (Khanh *et al*., 2022:32). Following are the statistical outcomes of the sample analysis in terms of such variables.

The participants attributes are analysed in more detail in the following sections.

Distance to the nearest beef cattle market.

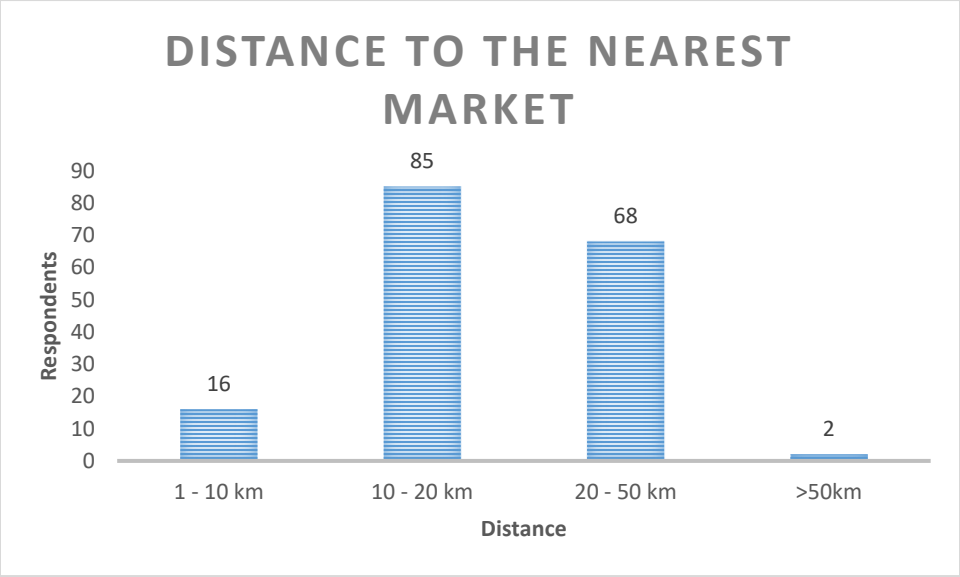

Figure 5.7 Distance to the nearest market

The distribution above shows that most of the respondents, 155 out of 171 (91%) travel between 10 km and 50 km to get to the nearest local market. These are long distances that can be a deterrent to beef cattle SMEs. This is a reflection that the beef SMEs framework has challenges in terms the availability of the relevant supportive infrastructure for easy of business execution. Shorter distances to the market are an impetus for beef SMEs to perform better as their transportation and other related costs become lower with smaller distance to the market (Vermesan & Friess, 2022:21). The government hence has a lot of work to do in terms of infrastructure development the A2 beef SMEs vision to materialise.

5.3.8 Number of years in business

Several studies quantitatively measured the relative early performance impact of the experience in business. Politis, Diamanto and Gabrielsson, Jonas (2005:180) opined that measurements are obtained on entrepreneur's personality and attitude, and various measurements on the experience of entrepreneur and the team. The entrepreneurial experience, namely the number of previous business involvement and the level of the management role played in such businesses is by far one of the most significant factors, including other factors like management, technical experience and other similar factors (Huarng, Mas-Tur & 2012:487-497).

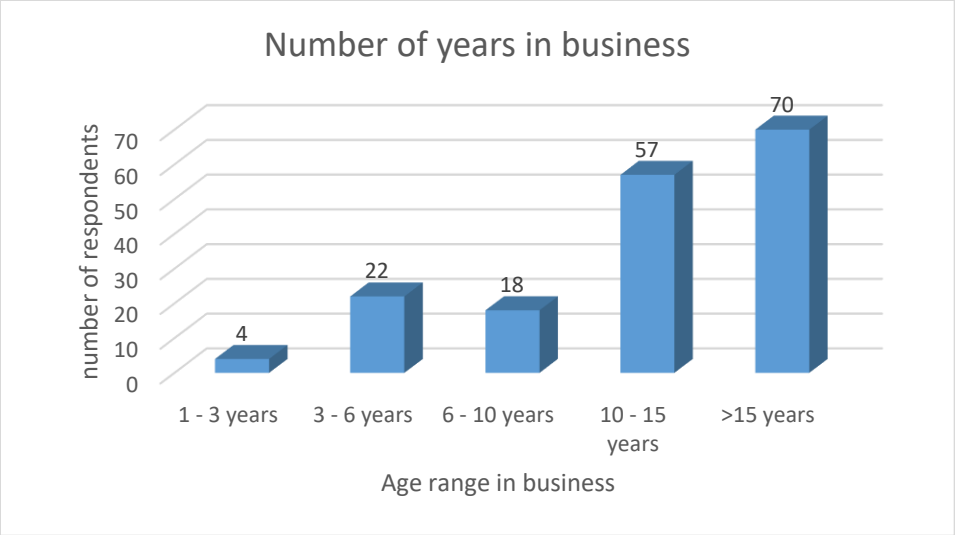

Figure 5.8 Number of years in business

The Figure above shows that most of the respondents (127 = 74%) are 10 years and more in the business. These A2 beef SMEs have been in business long enough to have been able to economically transform their entities. This further underpins one of the suspicions that most beef cattle SMEs take cattle ranching more as pass time than real businesses to impact the economy of Zimbabwe as is vision of the government for the A2 beef SMEs (Page & Okeke, 2019).

The slow development of beef SMEs also point to the fact that the current beef SMEs framework is not contributing adequately to the economic emancipation of these beef SMEs.

5.3.9 Number of employees

To establish the average number of people working in a beef cattle SME the respondents were asked to indicate the number of employees in their respective organisations. The results are illustrated in Figure 5.9 below.

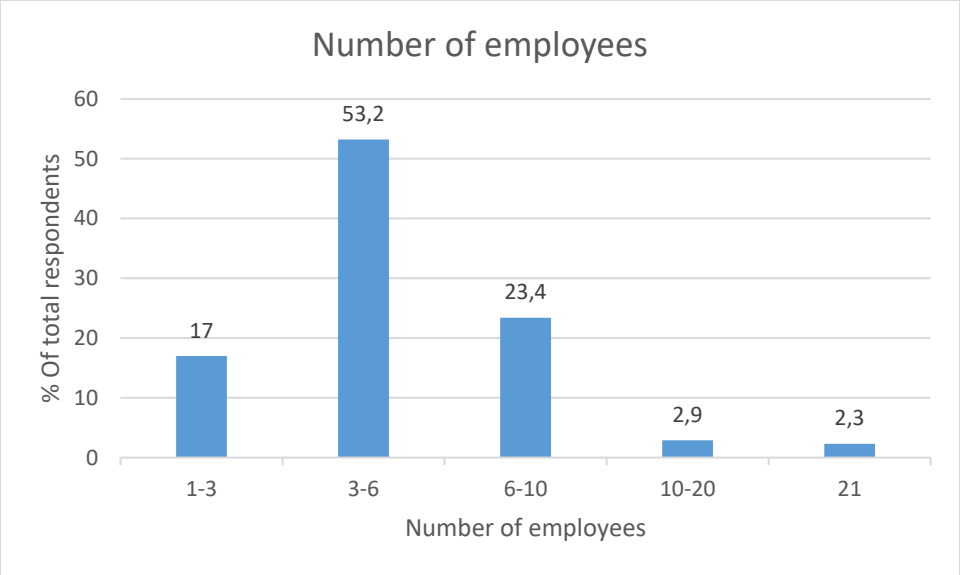

Figure 5. 9 The number of employees

The Fig shows that the highest % of the respondents, i.e.,53.2% have 3-6 employees followed by 23% and 17% of the respondents who have 6-10and 1-3 employees respectively. The least % are in the ranges 10-20 and 21+ with 2.9% and 2.3% respectively. There were no SME operators with more than thirty employees. These findings concur with the Zimbabwean Ministry of SMEs (2016) definition which states that a small business entrepreneur which is registered has less than fifty employees, while a medium business entity employs up to one hundred people. The researcher did not see any positive corelation between the size of the farm and the number of employees.

Most of these beef cattle SMEs are also involved in other farming activities and hence their employees are not necessarily entirely for the beef operations only and most of these aforesaid employees are casual workers only engaged during peak business times.

5.3.10 Collaborations with other SMEs

Collaborative entrepreneurship is the creation of something of economic value and substance arising out of new, jointly created ideas that emerge from the sharing of information and knowledge coming from outside an organisation (Franco & Haase, 2013; Miles et al., 2006)

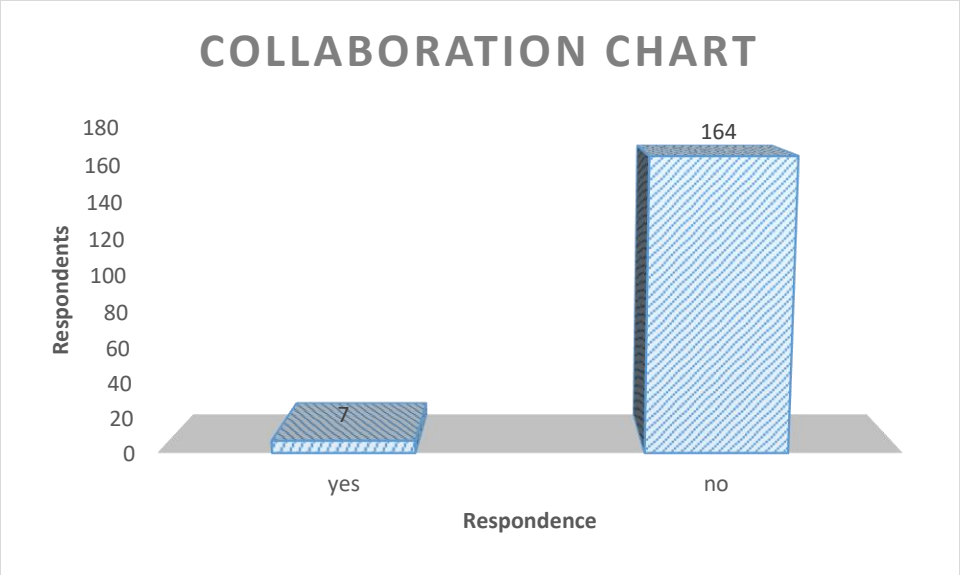

Figure 5.10 Collaboration Chart

The data in Figure 5.10 are indicative that the majority of the A2 beef cattle SMEs have very limited collaborative efforts with fellow beef SMEs in marketing and other business activities. Collaborations lead to synergies that are useful to the growth and sustainability of any business (Nayal, Raut, Yadav, Priyadarshinee & Narkhede, 2022: 845-859). Collaboration is one of the aspects identified in literature review as a necessary component of the new strategic entrepreneurial framework to help enhance the performance of the beef SMEs.

Collaboration capability in beef SMEs is identifiable through their ability to develop and to make profitable use of inter-organisational relationships with partners external to them (Andresen, Lundberg & Wincent, 2014:14; Li, Zhu, Wei and Yang, 2022: 30). A2 beef SMEs don't seem to have the necessary cohesion to forge synergies and combinations necessary for sustainable collaborations. In fact, they do not have much common ground in the form of websites or properly organised associations where they can meet and discuss such substance.

5.3.10 Summary of the participants and respondents' analysis

The information from the participants and responses can be summed up as follows: All respondents are literate, with the majority having earned a degree or diploma in tertiary education (60%), and the majority in the sample have more than 10 years in the business (71.75%). Most of the sample is made up of males (83.6%), with the largest group (51.46%) of respondents being between the ages of 40 and 49. 97% of the workers in the operations are proprietors.

5.4 Presentation of results

This section is a presentation and discussion of the qualitative and quantitative study findings obtained through the interviews and questionnaires. A triangulation approach was adopted in the presentation and discussion of the findings in line with the Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods design employed in the study. This means that under each research objective, the qualitative findings are presented first and then triangulated with the quantitative results on the aspect under discussion.

For the qualitative data, thematic analysis together with its various textual visualizations like the Word Tree analysis and Word Cloud analysis were employed to achieve comprehensive understanding of the issues that emerged in the study. The overall main themes derived from the qualitative interviews are presented in thematic frequency tables indicating emerged themes and the number of study participants who would have mentioned the same. To uphold confidentiality and anonymity of the interview participants, pseudonyms, a combination of letters BF (beef farmer) and unique numbers, were used. They were BF01 for the first interview participant, BF02 for the second interview participant, up to BF15, this being the total beef farmers interviewed.

For quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics utilising arithmetic mean, and standard deviation were applied on the Likert scale data while frequencies were used on other forms of questions in the questionnaire. The section is divided into four sub sections in line with the stated objectives.

5.4.1 Entrepreneurial orientation inA2 SME beef cattle production

The respondents indicated that there is a general deficiency in entrepreneurial orientation and culture amongst the beef cattle ranching SMEs. Table 5.2 below shows the reasons for limited entrepreneurial orientation/culture in e A2 beef cattle ranching SMEs in the communities studied.

Table 5.2: Reasons for limited entrepreneurial orientation among the A2 beef cattle ranching SMEs

Reasons for limited entrepreneurial orientation/culture in A2 beef cattle SMEs.	Key Informants who mentioned OR implied the same.	Total number of mentions
Limited record keeping skills	BF01 to BF15	15
Strategic goals generally not well articulated to guide operations.	BF01 to BF15	15

Corporate social responsibility not a priority.	BF01 to BF15	15
Working capital mainly from own savings	BF01…BF06, BF09…BF15	13
No substantive preparation of animals for the market to enhance returns.	BF01,04,05,06,07,09,11,12,13,14,15	11
Generally, no skills acquired specifically to help manage the beef cattle operations.	BF01, 03,04,06,07,08,09,10,12	9
Informal skills acquired through family assimilations.	BF03, 04,05,06,11,12,15	7

The respondents indicated that they generally do not have the relevant entrepreneurial culture to be running the beef cattle ranching operations as a full-fledged business enterprise. A close examination of the findings in Table 5.2 above reveals that three key aspects contribute to this situation, namely (i) limited competence in animal production and management especially cattle ranching; (ii) limited financial capital invested into the business; and (iii) limited entrepreneurial skills. The following statements from four interview participants emphasise these findings:

> *I personally don't have any skills in animal husbandry and farm management. I am just a generally literate person who work in government as an office administrator. In most of the things on the farm I rely more on my herd man who has some experience for some years in that role. He is equipped with basics on animal management, dipping and disease identification from a lay person's perspective (BF06.*
>
> *I do not have any special skills in beef cattle ranching formally. I also do not have much farm and business management background. I have learnt to do these things through experience and just stumbling along the way as I am running my operations. It is basically this experience of being hands on that is sustaining me to this stage (BF08, Zvimba District)*
>
> *I have put together my operating capital from other personal fund-raising projects. I have not been able to capitalise my operations in the way I would have wanted to as I felt I could not afford the expensive sources of capital in the financial open market given this unstable economic environment.*

I also do not have any collateral security to offer the open market financial institutions that being always part of their requirements (BF02, Makonde).

My operational capital is from my own personal resources now. I sold one of my cars to get a bit of capital and start this operation. Now when I need some money, I sell one of the animals to get some liquidity if I don't have other means (BF04, Zvimba District).

The quotations above show that A2 beef SMEs, generally, are in capitalisation challenge for their ranching enterprises and, consequently, they often resort to government for subsidised financial and other resources. This suggests that they have limited innovative financial mindset to look for alternative means to capitalise their businesses on their own.

The quantitative findings from the questionnaire respondents reinforce the existential entrepreneurial culture and orientation in cattle ranching across the communities studied as shown in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3: Responses on entrepreneurial orientation assessment in the A2 beef cattle SMEs

Item	Responses as Frequency (%)				
	Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
You have a routine schedule for selling cattle to the market as a normal business practice.	**122 (71.3%)**	**29 (17%)**	-	19 (11.1%)	1 (0.6%)
You have plans to grow your business.	11 (6.4%)	18 (10.5%)	1 (0.6%)	**108 (63.2%)**	**33 (19.3)**
You keep records for your business	27 (15.8%)	**68 (39.8%)**	**-**	**62 (36.3%)**	14 (8.2%)
You are familiar with diseases that affect cattle.	19 (11.1%)	**113 (66.1%)**	1 (0.6%)	**31 (18.1**)	7 (4.1)

You sell cattle mainly when you need cash for domestic use.	6 (3.5%)	16 (9.4%)	-	**91 (53.2%)**	**58 (33.9%)**
Your sales quantity has been increasing over the years.	**63 (36.8%)**	**89 (52%)**	1 (0.6%)	14 (8.2%)	4 (2.3%)
You finish off your animals in feed lots enroute to the market.	**122 (71.3%)**	**29 (17%)**	-	19 (11.1%)	1 (0.6%
You involved in assisting the community	11 6.4%)	**83 (48.5%)**	-	51 (29.8%)	26 (15.2%)
You comply with the statutory requirements, e.g., tax remittances	23 (13.5%)	**91 (53.2%)**	1 (0.6%)	**42 (24.6%)**	14 (8.2%)
You pay performance bonus to staff	13 (7.6%)	**62 (36.3%)**	2 (1.2%)	**76 (44.4%)**	18 (10.5%)
You are involved in alleviating environmental degradation	27 (15.8%)	**72 (42.1%)**	2 (1.2%)	**51 (29.8%)**	19 (11.1%)

As the findings in Table 5.3 above show, the majority (88%) of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed on the notions outlined that were designed to determine cattle ranching farmers' entrepreneurial skills, competence in animal production and management, business administration, and personnel management.

The situation seems to indicate that most beef SMEs do not take beef cattle ranching as a commercial business but just as a means of subsistence survival as reflected in the responses given in the table above. On this aspect, the interviews conducted revealed that the farmers sell their cattle often to solve immediate personal or household needs. This is explicit from the verbatim statement below from one of the cattle ranching farmers interviewed in Makonde District.

There is not much preparation I do to the beef cattle. It is a matter of just selling straight away when the need arises. Besides, even if I may want to do that, I don't have the facilities on my land for fattening etc. I don't even have dipping facilities and hence for such my cows travel quite some distance to access dipping (BF08, Makonde).

From the table above, more than 55% of the respondents either do not keep business records at all or the records kept are less informative to make sound business plans and routine decisions as illuminated in the quotation below.

Currently the only record I have is on the number of the cattle and their categories like the number of heifers, bulls etc. If I sell the meat after slaughtering on the farm, I will obviously record my sales, cash being received and credit purchases (BF12, Makonde)

The records I keep are not all-encompassing records one would always expect to really see in a normal and standard business environment. I have a book where I record Stock of animals in terms of heifers, cows, bulls etc. I also record every time I have a movement out and movement in. I don't do accounts as such, but I can see if I have made a profit from a sale or not. I always make profits though, according to my own assessment (BF10, Zvimba).

As the general practice in business stands, proper record keeping promotes accountability, auditability and evidence-based business planning and execution. While 11% either agreed or strongly agreed that their sales have increased over the past few years, it is quite probable the sales analysis was not based on proper record. The 89% of the respondents who expressed that their sales did not increase in the past few years corroborate with the finding from the interviews which indicated that most beef ranching farmers did not have deliberate plans to increase their herd. This suggests that they are less likely to have visions or inspirations to take their business enterprises to higher levels of operations as reflected in the quotations below.

Obviously when you are in business you expected to grow it. I need to find means to grow this operation as much as possible. Now I can't say I have a defined plan of how I am going to do that. In next five years I should have three times as much animals as I actually have. I currently have 16 animals (BF15, Zvimba).

In the future, I look forward to being having at least 50 animals as opposed to the 22 that I have. I doubt I will be able to achieve that because the economic conditions for doing business are not

favourable. It is not easy to get full time herd men or even general farm workers because the general remuneration levels are too low relative to the cost of living (BF14, Makonde).

A combination of unfavourable economic conditions and limited farmers' competence, seem to explain earlier suspicion in this study that A2 beef cattle SMEs' view beef cattle business more as a pass time than commercial business. Similarly, that cattle are generally kept as a store of value and sold to get quick cash to solve a current financial crisis in the family or community. One of the study participants in Zvimba District (BF10) stressed this point when she said that "*Usually, when I am offloading it will be a matter of quick sale to address a certain financial need immediately. I also sell slaughtered as meat already packed in 1kg, 2kg, and 5kg packets.* This is buttressed by the mean score of 4.05 of the 171 respondents which denotes they (respondents) agreed to the notion that one sells cattle only when the individual needs money for domestic use. In fact, the way business is viewed within the context of cattle ranching is shown in Figure 5.11 below, which emerged from the analysis of the interviews.

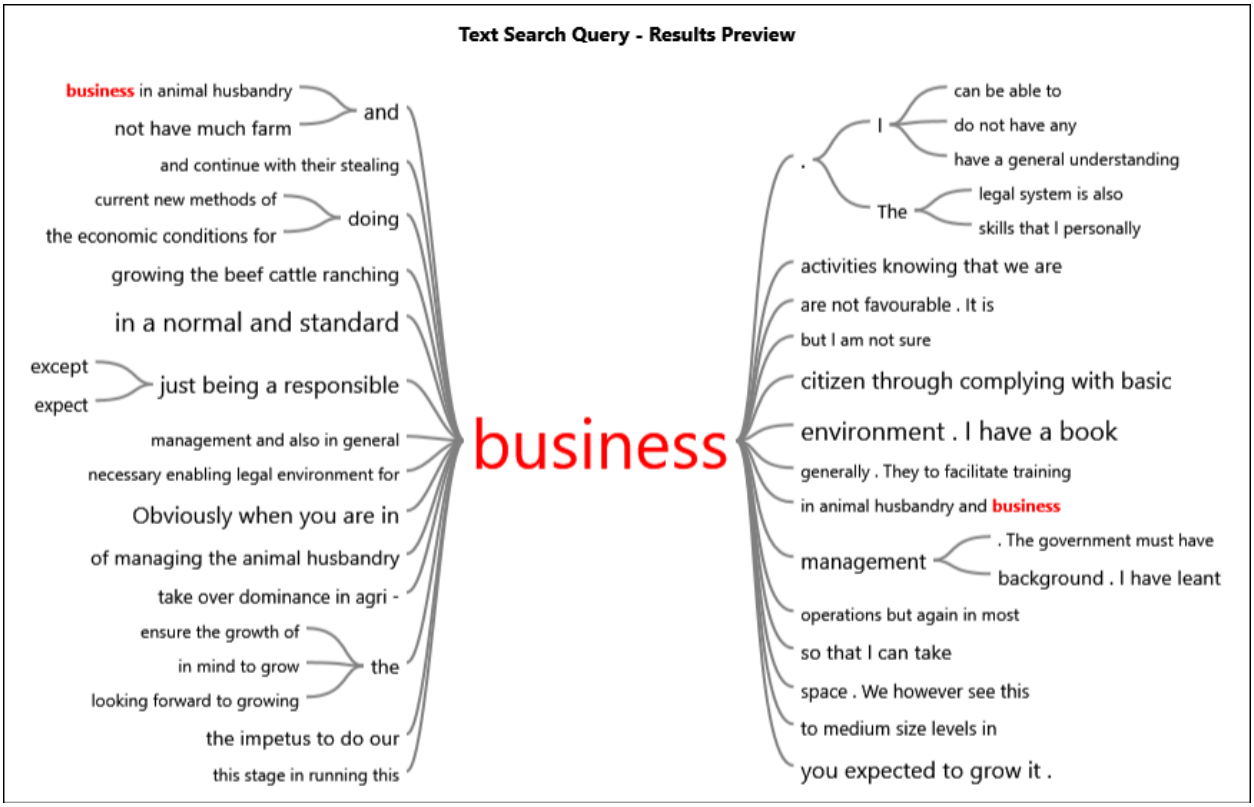

Figure 5.11: Views of business in cattle ranching

As the Figure 5.11 above depicts, the context in which the cattle ranching business was viewed included that the prevailing economic environment is not conducive, some farmers wish if they could have bigger pieces

of land, the legal and policy issues are not supportive of livestock production like cattle, and cattle ranching is a business undertaking that requires specific skills and disposition for it to be economically viable.

Overall, the extent to which an entrepreneurial culture exists in A2 beef SME sector is quantitatively summarised in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4: Overall mean scores on entrepreneurial orientation in SME beef cattle production

Business capacity in cattle ranching	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall mean score on personal business acumen	171	2.62	1.088
Overall mean score on corporate citizenship	171	2.97	1.282
Overall mean score		**2.80**	**1.185**

As Table 5.4 shows, the mean scores of personal business acumen and corporate citizenship are 2.62 and 2.97 respectively giving an overall mean score of 2.80. These mean scores indicate that, generally, the 171 respondents were indecisive or not confident in their competence to effectively run cattle ranching business. The next section are findings and discussion on the impact of government policy on the performance of Zimbabwe's beef SMEs sector.

5.4.2 Impact of government policy framework on the performance of Zimbabwe's SME sector

It was also important in this study to explore participants' understanding of the government's policy framework and its effects to business operations for SMEs in Zimbabwe. At the time of this study, the general supportive policy framework has been to support not only agriculturally based SMEs, but also SMEs in general. This has been implemented through tax concessions, restrictions on importation of certain agricultural produce to protect local producers and government assistance in inputs. Table 5.6 below outlines the study participants' views which emerged during the interviews about the government policy framework.

Table 5.6: Impact of policy framework on the Zimbabwe's SME sector

The reasons Government policy framework is not impacting	Interview participants who mentioned or implied the same	Total interview participants

adequately on the performance of Zimbabwe's SME sector.	**n = 15**	
Indigenisation policy has been heard about, but understanding is quite limited	BF05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15	10
Current laws have been helpful to a certain extent, more can be done.	BF01, 02, 03, 05, 06, 07,08, 11, 12	9
There is lack of depth in SMEs' understanding of legal issues	BF04, 05, 07, 08, 09, 11, 12, 14, 15	9
There are certain adverse effects emanating from the current legal system.	BF01, 02, 03, 06, 10, 13	6
Indigenisation policy is not known by several beef SMEs	BF01, 02, 03, 04, 11	5

As the Table 5.6 above shows, five themes emerged about how the study participants viewed the government support to the SMEs. In essence, the participants had the view that the government policy framework is limited in its support to the A2 beef cattle SMEs particularly that: the policies and laws are not quite known and not properly explained; and policies and laws are not effectively and consistently implemented, two participants, one from Makonde District and the other from Zvimba District, succinctly expressed the limited government policy and legal support this way:

> *No marketing of such policy has come to us. We however understand that the government does not expect us to rent out the land back to the displaced former owners. This ensures that we use the land ourselves and work to be productive therein. The government also has a policy of encouraging people to buy local products. This helps us against possible unfair competition from outside. The only problem is that we are not even self-sufficient to satisfy the local market ourselves. I have heard that there is duty free on imports on agricultural inputs. The problem is we don't have that individual capacity to import on our own (BF06, Makonde District).*

> *We don't seem to see policies that a functional in terms of beef cattle SMEs unless if they are just documented somewhere and we don't have access to such information. We don't quite know them*

let alone seeing their impact on our operations. I understand though that there is also policy on imports that all agricultural imports in line with animal medications are duty free. Most of us don't have the capacity to import our own imputes and hence we rely of shops that sell such. Am not sure if we benefit or those owners are the ones that benefit, I don't know (BF15, Zvimba District).

We feel that the legal system is also very porous as some unscrupulous dealers sometimes come to our areas to buy the A2 farmers cattle at unacceptably low prices which is tantamount to rip offs. We must have fixed prices by the government, and anybody seen ripping off A2 farmers must be charged since that slows economic development (BF01, Makonde District).

The following statements from two study participants from Zvimba District contradict each other on the view about the level of support from the legal system in the country.

Law enforcement system generally act without fear or favour. If one is to approach the courts for anything, they can be assisted, and the police are also always there to deal with would be offenders. We partake of our businesses freely knowing that we under the protection of the law (BF12, Zvimba District).

Sometimes when cattle rustlers are arrested, they are given bail out and continue with their stealing business. The legal system is also very corrupt with police and court officials taking bribes (BF09, Zvimba).

The views expressed from the interviews are substantiated by the descriptive statistics presented in Table 5.7a below which follows the respondent's summary in table 5.7. These were generated from the 171 beef SME respondents across the districts studied.

Table 5.7 Summary of Quantitative Research responses: The effect of government policy framework

	Policy Factor	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
1.	You have heard about the indigenisation policies	5 (5%)	**70 (40.9%)**	**-**	**71 (41.5)**	25 (14.6)
	You understand the government's vision with A2 SMEs	**54 (31.6%)**	**80 (46.8%)**	-	31 (18.1%)	6 (3.5%)
3	You attend training workshops on business management	**148**	**13**	1	8	1

		(80.5%	**(7.6%)**	(0.6)	(4.7%)	(0.6%)
4	Government provides loans to beef SMEs	**24 (14%)**	**82 (48%)**	13 (7.6%)	**50 (29.2%)**	2 (1.2%)
5	Government assist beef SMEs to get loans from the banks.	**158 (92.4%)**	5 (2.9%)	5 (2.9%)	2 (1.2%)	1 (0.6%)
6	The amount of paperwork and bureaucracy is user friendly when accessing the funds.	**45 (26.3%)**	**62 (36.3%)**	42 (24.6%)	18 (10.5%)	4 (2.3%)
7	Government offers a training programme for record keeping	**144 (84.2%)**	**20 (11.7%)**	6 (3.5%)	1 (0.6)	-
8	Government officers check compliance with stipulated recording keeping procedures.	**148 (86.5%)**	14 (8.2%)	5 (2.9%)	4 (2.3%)	-
9	Government has laws that support our beef products locally	25 (14.6%)	**108 (63.2%)**	**30 (17.5%)**	7 (4.1%)	1 (0.6)
10	Government has monitoring and evaluation program at local levels	**149 (87.1%)**	15 (8.8%)	5 (2.9%)	2 (1.2%)	-
11	We have easy access to foreign currency to buy the inputs	**163 (95.3%)**	5 (2.9%)	-	2 (1.2%)	1 (0.6%)

Table 5.7a below provides a descriptive statistical analysis of the respondents' views about government policies on beef cattle SMEs performance.

Table 5.7a: Views about government policies on beef cattle SME performance

Views about government policies on SME performance			
Policy Factor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
You have heard about the indigenisation policies	171	3.24	1.216
You understand the government's vision with A2 SMEs	171	2.15	1.158

You attend training workshops on business management	171	1.25	.744
Overall policy score		**2.213**	**1.0393**

As can be seen in Table 5.7a above, the highest mean score is 3.24 which reveals that the respondents were undecided if indeed they could say with certainty that they heard about the indigenisation policies with a variability in the response spread on this notion at standard deviation of 1.216. The lowest mean score is 1.25 which indicates that the respondents strongly disagreed that they attend training workshops on business management with a slight response variability of 0.744. The overall mean score is 2.213, which means that, generally, the 171 respondents disagreed with all the policies regarding the government of Zimbabwe policies on SMEs' performance. Essentially, these statistics concur with the views expressed by the study participants that policies have done little to support their cattle ranching SME operations. The following quotations from two of the interview participants reinforce the statistical findings presented here, with a particular inclination to the Fast-Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) policy.

The whole land redistribution process was an empowerment drive by the government of Zimbabwe to the people of Zimbabwe. As for the details of the policy, am not very sure of the details. The government of course wants us to ensure self-sufficiency in the country regarding beef and other agriculturally based products (BF05, Zvimba District).

In agreement with the above notion, another participant from Zvimba district said

> *One would presume that the mind of government on embarking on the FTLRP to ensure that the previously disadvantaged citizens of Zimbabwe are empowered. It is painful to note that the vision has never been articulated not only to me, but also to my colleagues in the farming community. The understanding is very blared. All we saw happening was land being distributed to the majority, a good thing still but as for the proper marketing and support of the agenda, there is a big bottleneck there (BF07, Zvimba District).*

The quotations above also reveal a recurring finding that policies are not well disseminated and explained for optimum benefit to the policy target groups. The next section is a summary of statistics on the policy dimension concerning financial related policies and procedures.

5.8 Financial related policies and procedures for beef SMEs in the country

Table 5.8 below outlines descriptive statistics on five financial related policy issues that have a direct effect on SMEs including the cattle ranching farmers studied.

Financial related policy issues	n	Mean	Standard deviation
The amount of paperwork and bureaucracy is discouraging when accessing funds from public financial institutions	171	3.65	1.200
Government provides loans to beef SMEs	171	2.56	1.091
Government officers check compliance with stipulated recording keeping procedures.	171	1.21	.606
Government offers a training programme for record keeping	171	1.20	.519
Government assists beef SMEs to get loans from the banks.	171	1.15	.571
Overall financial score		**1.954**	**0.579**

The data presented in Table 5.8 above shows that the highest mean score is 3.65 with a standard deviation of 1.200. The mean score (3.65) signifies that the respondents agreed that the amount of paperwork and bureaucracy is discouraging them when to access funds from public financial institutions for their business operations. The lowest mean score is 1.15 which indicates that the respondents strongly disagreed with the notion that government assists beef SMEs to get loans from the banks with a slight response variability at 0.571. As can be seen, the overall mean score on financial related policy issues is 1.954 which indicates that, generally, the respondents expressed that their financial related policies are not adequately addressed by the government. The statistics shed lighter on the general government support to SMEs revealed from the 171 beef SME respondents in this study.

Table 5.9 General government support to beef cattle SMEs

General government Support to beef SMEs	n	Mean	Standard deviation
Government has laws that support our beef products locally	171	2.13	.724
Government has monitoring and evaluation programmes at local level	171	1.18	.528
We have easy access to foreign currency to buy the inputs	171	1.09	.471
General support score		**1.467**	**0.574**

The mean scores outlined above clearly indicates that the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the three dimensions expected of government to provide support to beef SMEs. This further emphasise the earlier findings which suggest that the government is viewed as less supportive to the cattle beef SMEs in the two districts studied. The next section deals with how the study participants viewed the specific government's technical support mechanisms it provides to the SMEs in the beef cattle sector.

Government's technical support to the SME's beef cattle sector

The other aspect the study investigated was to assess level of technical support the government provides to the beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe. Four themes emerged around the technical support the government has provided by the time of this study, the gaps in technical support, and suggestions by the cattle beef SMEs to how the government could improve its provision of technical support. The findings on these dimensions are given in the following sub-sections.

Technical support the government provides to the beef cattle SMEs

Table 5.10: Government's technical support to the SME's beef cattle sector

n (total number of respondents) = 15			
Technical support the government provides to the beef cattle SMEs	**Interview participants' responses by district**		
	Makonde n = 7	**Zvimba n = 8**	**Total**

Limited and infrequent veterinary services provided	5	7	**12**
Little support is being provided on disease management	3	7	**10**
Training on early detection of diseases	2	2	**4**

The findings above indicate that the technical support often provided by the government is veterinary services. Furthermore, the findings reveal that the services are quite necessary, but they are rarely provided as one of the interview participants expressed in the quotation below.

> *The veterinary scientists sometimes come to check on our animals for diseases. Their visits are very few and very far apart and are also not all encompassing. As it stands, am not sure if the government is relevant to me personally as far as technical support is concerned (BF08).*

It has been noted that sustainable functionality of A2 beef SMEs heavily depends on the availability of the technical support in the form of veterinary services, relevant infrastructure and knowledge and information dissemination (Hermans, Geerling-Eiff, Potters and Klerkx, 2019:76-95). From the interviews, it also emerged that the country has quite a limited number of veterinary experts to provide the necessary technical support and services t the beef cattle SMEs. This suggests that the government of Zimbabwe may not be able to attain its vision on the A2 beef SMEs in the absence of the much-needed technical support in the form veterinary services support.

5.4.3 Technical capacity needs in the beef cattle business operations

From the interviews conducted, it emerged that the study participants stated that there were certain technical capacity aspects they needed to improve their business operations as outlined in Table 5.11 below.

Table 5.11: The beef cattle SME technical capacity needs

Technical capacity needs	Makonde District n = 7	Zvimba District n = 8	Total participants
Knowledge and skills in animal husbandry	6	8	**14**
Disease control and management	2	3	**5**
Management of beef cattle feed lots	2	0	**2**

Essentially, the findings above reveal that the beef cattle farmers have technical capacity limitation in the animal husbandry profession as emphasised in the quotations below from the study participants.

> *The government support technically at present leaves a lot be desired. Usually, it's too little and too late. We have lost animals through disease outbreaks with the government systems being caught pants down on that aspect. Yes, officials do come for inspections and advisory workshops on some basic livestock disease identifications have been done long back and where not even all encompassing, hence a lot more is needed (BF04).*
>
> *The other informant adding to what the above said also alluded that:*
>
> *The government must provide us with the relevant trainings on basic animal management in terms of diseases administration and control, vaccinations etc. The government must also help us with the erecting of dip tanks and other technical facilities like feed lots and dams for water reservoir (BF06).*
>
> *The relevant government department should intensify trainings to beef cattle SMEs on all aspects from management in general to technical issues. They should appreciate the necessity for government to establish permanent mechanisms for continuous training of beef A2 and other SMEs. The response mechanism by the government should be astute. They must try to be real time in their response to disease outbreaks. Vaccinations must be done in line with required programs for such to be effective (BF07).*
>
> *We need training on the basic understanding of diseases that affect cattle and how we can overcome them is as lay way as possible. We need to know ways by which we can improve the quality of our animals and the sizes of our cattle (BF05).*

This finding concurs with the finding presented earlier that most of the beef cattle ranchers view cattle as a resource to be used in times when the household faces a financial challenge and less as a going business concern. In fact, the participants generally concurred that there was limited technical support from the government on their beef cattle business operations. on infrastructure development and an enabling environment for technical information dissemination. Below are the descriptive statistics analysed from the

questionnaire respondents on the same subject matter of government's technical support to the beef SMES sector in the country.

Below is the summary of responses regarding the government's technical support mechanisms.

Table 5.12 Summary of Quantitative Research responses: Government technical support mechanisms

	Policy Factor	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The government provide expertise to help in your operations	5 (2.9%)	**102 (59.6%)**	1 (0.6%)	**60 (35.1%)**	3 (1.8%)
2	You have access to government subsidised resources, e.g., fuel	**40 (23.4%)**	**117 (68.4%)**	-	11 (6.4%)	3 (1.8%)
3	You have access to government distributed information (gazette, brochures, and fliers) about its various SME support policies	**98 (57.3%)**	**67 (39.2%)**	1 (0.6%)	4 (2.3%)	1 (0.6%)
4	The government provide duty exemptions on your business imports	**59 (34.5%)**	**75 (43.9%)**	25 (14.6%)	11 (6.4%)	1 (0.6%)
5	The road network up to standard	**113 (66.1%)**	**52 (30.4%)**	1 (0.6%)	3 (1.8%)	2 (1.2%)
6	You are benefiting from the government's research and development initiatives for SMEs	**43 (25.1%)**	**94 (55%)**	-	32 (18.7%)	2 (1.2%)
7	The government helps you in marketing your products	**161 (94.2%)**	7 (4.1%)	-	1 (0.6)	2 (1.2%)
8	You go for government sponsored business management trainings	**146 (85.4%)**	20 (11.7%)	-	5 (2.9%)	-
9	You get government training on animal husbandry	**150 (87.7%**	15 (8.8%)	1 (0.6%)	4 (2.3%)	1 (2.3%)

Below is the descriptive statistical analysis of responses on the government's technical support mechanisms.

Table 5.12a: Responses on government's technical support to the beef SMEs sector

Policy Factor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The government provide expertise to help in your operations	171	2.73	1.034
You are benefiting from the government's research and development initiatives for SMEs	171	2.16	1.042
You have access to government subsidised resources, e.g., fuel	171	1.95	.806
The government provide duty exemptions on your business imports	171	1.95	.896
You have access to government distributed information (gazette, brochures, and fliers) about its various SME support policies	171	1.50	.689
The road network up to standard	171	1.42	.709
The government helps you in marketing your products	171	1.11	.521
Overall mean score		**1.831**	**0.8135**

The statistical findings above show that the highest mean score and its standard deviation are 2.73 and 1.034 respectively. This indicates that the respondents could say with certainty that the government provides technical expertise to help them in their beef cattle ranching operations. It also seen that the lowest mean score of 1.11 reveals that the respondents strongly disagreed with the notion that the government helps them in marketing their products. The rest of the mean scores denote that the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed on the statements regarding technical support that the government is believed to have been providing by the time of this study with an overall mean score of 1.831. This overall mean score

indicates that the 171 respondents generally disagreed on all the seven (7) technical aspects the government was expected to have been providing to the beef SMEs sector in the communities studied. The overall mean standard deviation of 0.81351.13 which is slightly below 1, shows that the responses from the study participants on the seven statements vary slightly from the average mean of 1.831 (disagree).

On further reflection on the technical support gaps evident in the beef cattle SMEs sector, the study participants made suggestions on what could be done to improve this aspect, and this is shown in Table 5.13 below.

Table 5.13: Suggestions to the government to improve technical assistance to the A2 beef cattle SMEs

Suggestions on technical assistance to the beef cattle SMEs sector	Makonde District (n = 7)	Zvimba District (n = 8)	Total participants
To capacitate the veterinary officers with adequate resources from the provincial, district and ward levels	5	5	**10**
The government must provide training to A2 farmers to equip them with knowledge on animal husbandry	4	6	**10**
Construction of dams, feed lots and more dip tanks	0	3	**3**

It is clear from the finding outlined above that to achieve improvement in the beef cattle SMEs, there is need for a concerted effort from the government to strategise and invest in beef cattle SMEs sector. Most importantly, to promote training of more people in veterinary services and construction of the necessary infrastructure for the livestock production and management in the communities. One of the participants summarised the challenge pertaining veterinary services as follows:

> *We understand that the veterinary officials are supposed to be visiting us frequently in our farms to check on our livestock in terms of diseases. We are also supposed to be getting dipping support and general relevant education on animal husbandry and record keeping and accounting techniques (BF03).*

The final set of findings are hinged on the suggestions the study participants proffered beef cattle SMEs sustainability in Zimbabwe.

5.4.4 Suggestions for beef cattle SMEs sustainability in Zimbabwe

Below are the visualisations of suggestions from the interview dataset to inform the strategic sustainable entrepreneurial framework to increase beef production through A2 SMEs in Zimbabwe. Figure 5.8 below is a word cloud analysis that represents the most frequently mentioned words or phrases the interview participants expressed in making their suggestions.

Figure 5.12: Key words used to develop a questionnaire

The Figure 5.8 above shows that technical authorities in animal husbandry should be well structured and resourced to support the beef SMEs sector. In addition, proper and adequate infrastructure for beef cattle ranching should be developed and sustained for the beef SMEs sector. From the perspective of logistics in the transportation of cattle to market, it is also evident in the Figure above that there is need for good roads. Also, the beef cattle SMEs requires all the stakeholders to be involved in the respective points in the in the beef value chain. The stakeholder involvement dimension is represented in the tree diagram below.

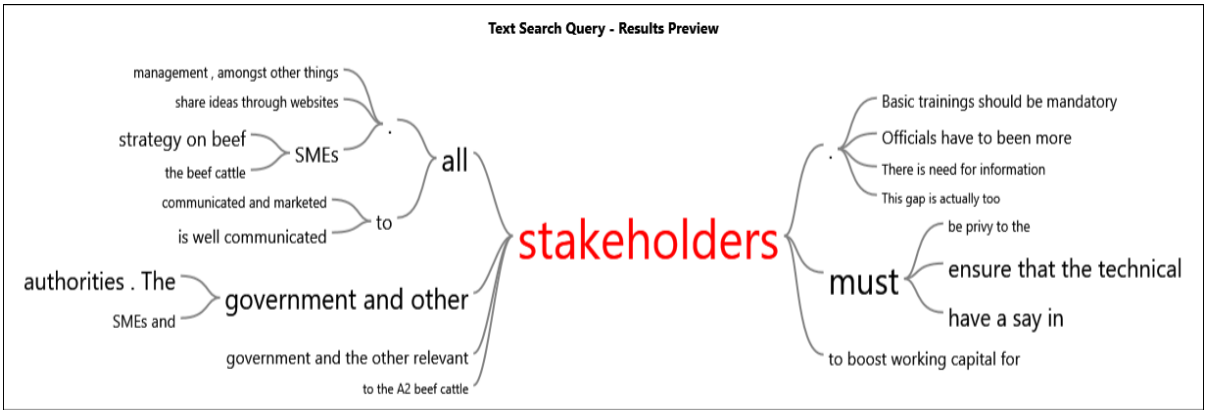

Figure 5.13: The involvement of stakeholders

A Close examination of the word tree analysis displayed above reveals that the stakeholders' involvement dimension was suggested to be at three key levels: One, that the beef SMEs are key stakeholders that should be involved in policy formulation on issues that directly affect them. Two, there should be capacity building framework that encourages and support expert stakeholders to provide the necessary skills trainings to the beef SMEs. Three, information communication technology (ICTs) systems should be designed for sharing information including marketing for the beef SMEs. The aspect of improvement on communication among the beef SME farmers also featured in the analysis of the questionnaire responses where 169 of the 171 (99%) respondents agreed that there is need for cluster groups of beef and other SMEs for better business interaction and information sharing. On the disconnect between the beef SME farmers and the technical government departments, all the respondents (100%) strongly agreed that it would help greatly if the ministry agriculture established offices at all local administrative centres in the country. The interview participants also brought up this issue when they said that local offices would be crucial to ensure timeous dissemination of information between the SMEs and the relevant government officials for prompt action.

Finally, the financial sector stakeholder should actively be involved to design financial instruments that meet the requirements and ability of beef SMEs in the country. Synthesised from the interview data, the table below summarises some of roles the stakeholder should play in the beef SMEs sector.

Table 5.14: Some of the roles stakeholders are expected to play in beef SMES sector

n (total number of respondents to this question) = 15			
Suggestions for sustainability of beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe	**Districts enumerated and participants who mentioned the same**		
	Makonde n = 7	Zvimba n = 8	**Total**
Construction of relevant infrastructure like dams, feed lots and dip tanks in the cattle farms	5	6	**11**
Provision of skills training on animal husbandry management	4	6	**10**

Provision of appropriate financial products/loans to cattle SMEs with affordable interest rates	2	3	**5**

From the findings outlined above, it appears that the three roles indicated are considered crucial for the sustainable operations of the beef SMEs sector. In fact, the series of statements that were formulated for the study to seek level of agreement from the respondents if they (statements) could be considered towards development of a strategic entrepreneurial framework is given in Figure 5.10 below.

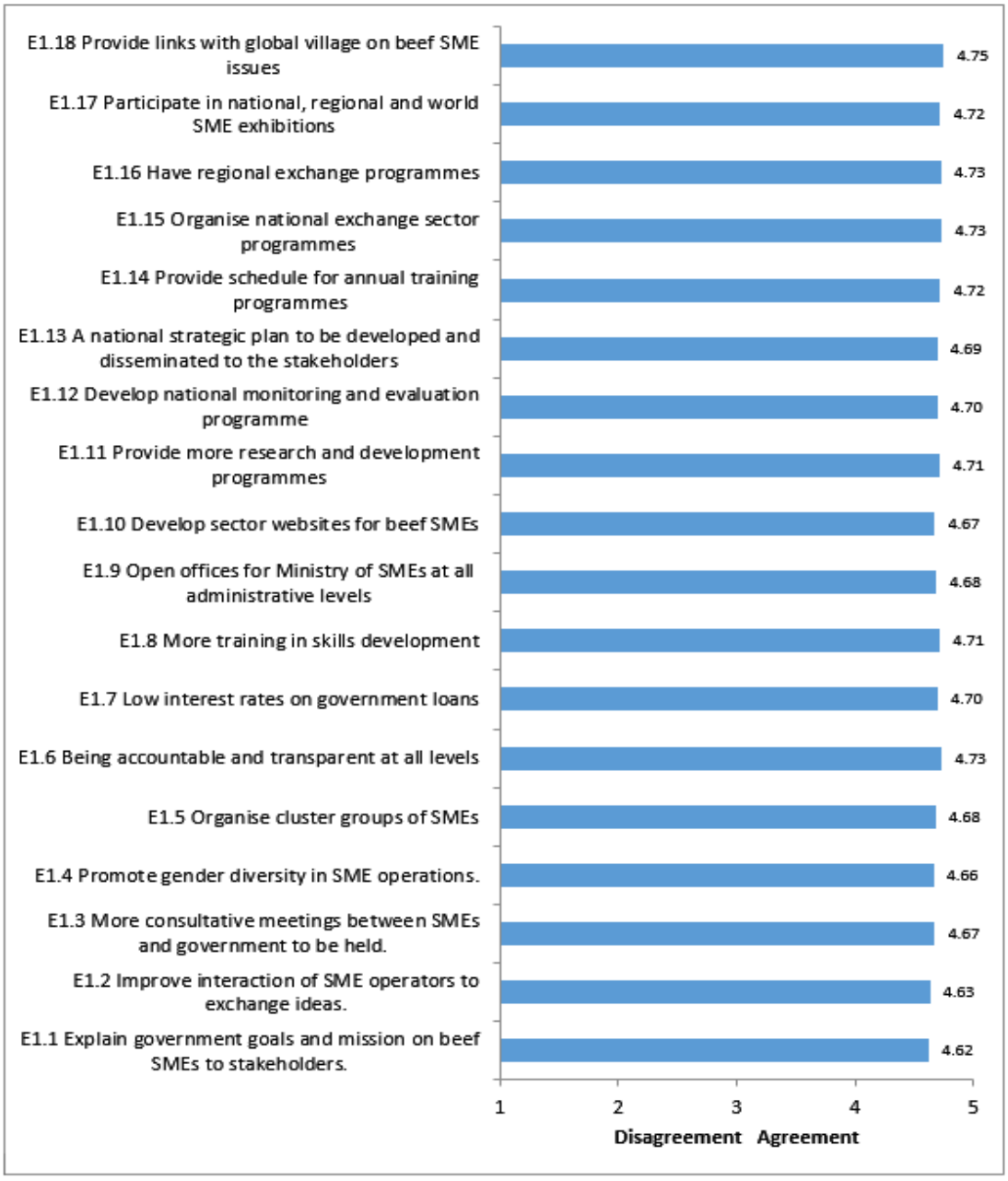

Figure 5.14: Contents of the new strategic entrepreneurial framework

The Figure 5.14 above shows that all the 171 respondents strongly agreed with the notions outlined for a new strategic entrepreneurial framework with mean scores that range from 4.62 to 4.75 and the overall mean score of 4.57. The results illustrate stakeholders' high level of desire to have a new strategic entrepreneurial framework for them to improve their beef cattle SME performance. From the interviews conducted, the participants described how they envisioned the new strategic entrepreneurial framework as discussed in the next section.

5.5 Contents of the new Strategic Entrepreneurial Framework

The respondents were able to state the content of their desired new strategic entrepreneurial framework for improvement and sustainability of the beef SME sector in Zimbabwe.

> *There is need to improve interactions between beef SMEs and government and other stakeholders. Basic trainings should be mandatory to SMEs in A2 establishments with a focus on animal husbandry and farm management, among other things (BF02, Makonde District).*

In addition, the A2 beef entrepreneurs highlighted that infrastructure development is key for the success of the beef SMEs as emphasised by one participant from Makonde district who expressed that:

> *There is also need for proper infrastructure in terms of dip tanks, properly serviced roads for easy of transport and communication networks and information on the national strategy on beef SMEs. It must be ensured that beef SMEs participate in national, regional and world SME exhibitions as a way of information exchange with their colleagues from other countries and continents (BF11).*

The new strategic entrepreneurial framework is expected to have a strong human capacity development component through skills training of the beef cattle SME entrepreneurs.

> *There is great need for training programs on general management skills and animal keeping that is up to standard. There is need to be deliberate on the national strategy and to ensure that is well communicated to all stakeholders ((BF03).*

The study participants also expressed that the new strategic entrepreneurial framework should embrace financial inclusion where affordable financing would be made available for the A2 beef cattle entrepreneurs. The quotation below from one of the study participants emphasises this aspect.

Inexpensive finance must be availed by government and the other relevant stakeholders to boost working capital for the beef cattle SMEs (BF03).

The participants mentioned prominently their expectations of the role the government must play in the development of this new strategic entrepreneurial framework to increase beef production in Zimbabwe through the A2 SMEs.

Overall, the key conceptual consideration for the envisioned new strategic entrepreneurial framework is stakeholder participation, skills development, infrastructure development, information sharing and communication, technical assistance, transportation, value chain and market linkages.

5.10 Summary

The data collected has indicated that the interviewees and questionnaire respondents have very low entrepreneurial orientation. They also have moderate to low knowledge levels of the Zimbabwe empowerment policies and the government's vision with A2 beef cattle SMEs. The government has not been able to offer enough resources to meet the needs of the beef cattle SME operators, according to both the interviews and the questionnaire respondents. The financial resources are quite limited, and the mechanism for choosing the beneficiaries is not methodical, raising questions about corruption. The paperwork involved is also cumbersomely too bureaucratic. Information about the beef SME programmes is not systematically disseminated and hence the beef SMEs are not able to access the information.

These conclusions above resonate with the main suspicions of the study as highlighted in chapter one and in literature review. In a glimpse, the suspicions are that most A2 beef cattle ranchers do not view their operations in a business sense, that they have very little appreciation of the government's vision when they were allocated land under the FTLRP, and that the government support is limited and deplorable. There is also extremely inadequate technical support in terms of visiting veterinary officers, research and development under the auspices of current trends in diseases amongst other aspects. There is a deplorable lack of critically needed infrastructure, for instance dip tanks, feeding and drinking facilities and many more. Most of the A2 beef farmers do not even stay at the farms and rely on the herd men who are now increasingly becoming very scarce owing to the generally far below poverty datum line wages they are paid.

Some positives have been derived from the findings in that A2 beef SMEs have undisputable ownership of the pieces of land they occupy since they have offer letters which give them ownership. Some of these SMEs are quite committed to their operations but are let down by macro environmental factors around them which

they don't have control over. There is also some level of innovation within them as they group together to hire and share herd men, private animal scientists, sharing of diseases information and information on use of traditional herbs for treating animals.

In order to create a locally developed, stakeholder driven strategic entrepreneurial framework that addresses the current situation of the beef ranching SMEs in Zimbabwe, the new strategic entrepreneurial framework should address the shortcomings of the current systems being used by the government and the A2 beef SMEs.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND INTERGRATION OF DATA

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the quantitative and qualitative data analysis and presentation of the study results. This chapter focuses on interpretation and discussion of the results following their presentation in the previous chapter. In other words, synthesis of findings on each research objective is made as evident in the next sections. The syntheses are arranged and presented in line with the research objectives.

6.2 Synthesis of study findings

This sub-section is presentation of the results synthesis under all the four research objectives that underpinned the study.

6.2.1 Results synthesis on the entrepreneurial culture and orientation within the A2 beef SMEs and impact on their performance.

The synthesis on the results on the entrepreneurial culture and orientation within the A2 beef SMEs is organized through seven (7) sub-themes, namely general husbandry practice, corporate social responsibility, environmental protection, records keeping, skills possession, selling schedules and Sourcing of operating capital for business growth.

General animal husbandry practice

The study findings revealed that 99% of A2 SMEs studied either do not fatten prior to taking them to the market or at or they do it just to restore the animal's lost health status to make it saleable. It also emerged from the findings that the most farmers do not relevant fattening facilities within their farms or anywhere nearby for to fatten their cattle and provide extra feeding. The findings also showed that some of the cattle ranching farmers do so as a subsistence and less as a business undertaking. From these findings, it is obvious that the A2 beef SMEs' practitioners have limited skills to practice proper animal husbandry.

Corporate social responsibility

The findings have indicated that the respondents the A2 beef SMES are not involved in community or philanthropic services. This suggests that the respondents have little understanding of the corporate social responsibility concept and practice as well as its connection to business success.

Environment protection

The study findings have shown that the 87.8% of the A2 SMEs are not deliberately involved in activities of environmental alleviation. This finding clearly shows the respondents have limited appreciation and understanding of the link between environmental protection and the viability and sustainability of the beef ranching business.

Records keeping

The respondents indicated that the records they keep are either inadequate or not correctly done. This means that the records are not sufficient to provide business information to inform strategic direction and business operations.

Skills possession

With regards to the skills possession t that are critical for business management, the study results revealed that there is remote effort for continuous capacity development to keep up with dynamic business environment in the beef ranching sector. Among other aspects, this is evident in the 88% of the respondents expressed that they never finished off their feedlots in readiness for the market. Another example of limited skills is shown in the result that 91.2% of the respondents never complied with the relevant statutory requirements like tax remittances due to skills deficiency.

Selling schedules

Regarding the preprogramed sending of the animals to the market there is generally no scheduled programs as indicated in table 5.5.5. The results have shown that almost 80% of the respondents do not have any routine schedules or have very little adherence to them whenever they are made available. This is corroborated by the statistical evidence that about 87% sell their animals mainly to meet personal cash needs. These findings clearly indicate that without guided by defined schedule and business calendar of events for selling their animals, the standard practice in this sector is quite deficient.

Sourcing of operating capital for business growth

Most of the interviewed A2 beef SMEs have never tried to obtain funding from open market sources but relying mostly on personal savings which are critically inadequate. This finding resonates with the other finding that the respondents lack entrepreneurial culture. The A2 beef cattle entrepreneurs also seem to be highly risk averse and hence are reluctant to source working capital from open commercial market. this explains the 80% of the respondents who said that they did not have decisive plans to grow their business. These findings further reinforce the lack of entrepreneurial culture and orientation amongst the A2 beef SMEs.

6.2.2 Impact of government policy framework on the performance of Zimbabwe's SME sector

Under this focus of the stuy, the synthesis is presented in four thematic areaa as follows: understanding of government policy; effects government policy on beef SME operations; skills development factor; and financial factor.

a) Understanding of government policy

Generally, the respondents demonstrated that they have an unclear understanding of both the indigenisation and empowerment policy as well as the vision for the A2 model of the fast-track land reform program with regards to beef cattle farming. Almost all the study participants interviewed either mentioned a lack of understanding of the policies or total lack of knowledge of it. As the interview data revealed, 9 out of 15 of the interviewees indicated limited knowledge in legal matters that relate to beef SMEs and SMEs in general. The Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act (IEEA), Chapter14:33, Act 14/2007, which contains all the information that has been indicated by the respondents as features that demand attention, is in line with the policy issues that were brought up as matters of concern by the interviewees and respondents. Although the policy and its intentions were clearly communicated to all the experts in the SME sector which include employees of the government departments, SME sector leaders, non-governmental organisations

coordinators and various captains of the SME sector, the study results suggests that there has been little cascading of the knowledge/information to the beef cattle farmers at community level.

Effects of government policy on beef SME operations

Generally, the government policies have positively contributed to the beef SMEs' operations through tax concessions, restrictions on importation of certain agricultural produce to protect local producers and government assistance in inputs. On the protection of the local products, the study found that the beef SMEs do not have the production capacity to meet the local market by themselves. The study has also found that these interventions have yielded results needed in the sector. These findings indicate that although the respondents had little knowledge about the government policy, it became clear that it is progressive and has beneficial provisions for the SMEs including the beef SMEs sector. In other words, the main challenge on the government's progressive policies is the implementation to support the SMEs. With the average mean score of 2.2 and standard deviation of 1.04 that emerged from this study, it can be concluded that the government policies have a slight effect on the performance of beef cattle SMEs.

Skills Development Factor

As the findings indicated, the respondents never attended any training on management skills in general and on animal husbandry. This is true even though the Zimbabwe Industrial Development Policy (IDP) (2012–2016) contains a section that stipulates that *capacity building for employee skill training and the establishment of shared facilities will be undertaken*. The main justification provided for the lack of capacity building is that it is expensive for the participants and that most of them don't even know about it since information is not available. From these findings, it can be concluded that there is not much learning among the A2 beef cattle farmers to enhance their managerial capabilities.

As an example, Indonesia has created programs for SMEs that include technology transfer, management skills training, and equipment support (machinery and tools). For SMEs to use, the Indonesian government sponsored training facilities (Handoko et al, 2019). In addition, the government of Malawi impacted the entrepreneurial mindset of its population through the reengineering and restructuring of public organisations whose mandate is national entrepreneurship development such as Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurial Training Authority (TEVETA) and Small and Medium Enterprise Development Institute (SMEDI) (Ndala & Pelser, 2019). These countries had fully appreciation of the fact that training of the SME entrepreneurs is crucial to the improvement of their performance and business sustainability. Mbendi (2003), noted that SMEs in Zimbabwe contribute less than 5%to GDP and yet in the neighbouring countries like

South Africa SMEs are regarded as the hub of the economy contributing about 56% on average towards employment and 36 percent towards GDP (Olawale & Garwe, 2010). Conclusively to the point, it is researcher's opinion that there is a direct link between capacity development and productivity in the SMEs in general.

Financial Factor

The financial factors clearly indicate that the respondents felt that their financial situation was quite dire.

Additionally, the government's financial support and financial management training were inquired about from the respondents. The conclusion drawn from the data analysed is that most of them responded 'not at all' which meant that the government has not supported them financially as well as provision of training in the management of finances. This financial factor challenge exists even though the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act (IEEA) Chapter14:33 of 14/2007 provides for financial assistance to indigenous Zimbabweans at various circumstances of the business like the business start-up, rehabilitation and expansion. On this aspect, the majority of the 171 respondents (95.7%) expressed that government has a limited loan facility to financially support the SMEs.

Malaysia is an illustration of a government that provides substantial financial support for SMEs. The commercial banks in Malaysia are the primary source of funding for SMEs, providing financing for working capital at a rate of roughly 70.4%. (Bhuiyan et al.,2016). According to studies done in the USA on the impact of government financial assistance on startup businesses, government guarantees, loans, and equity in companies paved the way for SMEs to perform well. The study's findings also showed that government equity and financial guarantees have a direct bearing on the development of new businesses (Fernando et al., 2014).

Brazilian SME Support Service (SEBRAE), a comprehensive system, offers business assistance to SMEs in Brazil (Aces, 2008). In 2007, SEBRAE gave SMEs financial help of US$ 1.1 billion, and the SME sector employs most Brazilian workers (Cravo et al., 2014). The most common methods employed to encourage the technological advancement of SMEs are innovation funds, equity finance, and venture capital. The promotion of venture capital is being led by the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES). According to Agarwal (2019), India's government has a strong funding package for assisting SMEs. In order to assist every SME in need of financial assistance, the following indigenous structures for financing Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) were established in India:

- Chit Fund
- National Industrial Development Bank of India (NIDBI)
- Micro-Financing
- Small Industry Development Bank of India (SIDBI
- Grameen Banks
- Cooperative Banks (similar to Fund Banks in US / Europe)
- Invest India Start-Up Initiative
- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Loan Yojana (PMMY) Scheme

According to Aliogo and Eneh (2017), in India, SMEs account for 97% (10.5 million) of industrial units, employ 45% (25 million) of the labour force, and contribute 45% to overall export and 7% to GDP. With this kind of setup in place, all SMEs that need financial support can get it. The success of Indian SMEs can be attributed to the government's robust financial backing. In contrast, the Zimbabwean government has no history of a SME financing program across the sectorial divide that was well implemented. These findings have revealed that without a substantive government financial assistance, the Zimbabwean beef cattle SMEs are less likely to improve their productivity and sustainability.

6.2.3 Government's technical support levels to beef SMEs cattle sector

The government's technical support to the beef SMEs will be discussed from four (4) dimensions, namely general government support, animal disease control, A2 beef SMEs monitoring and evaluation and assistance in enacting the necessary operational infrastructure. These are discussed in turn in the sections that follow.

General government support

Despite having sensible rules, the government does not appear to have any clear intentions for providing the required technical resources to strengthen the A2 beef cattle SMEs, according to the study's findings. The resource-based view theory (RBV) asserts that resources are the essential elements and emphasizes their importance for every organization aiming for high performance. The resource-based perspective hypothesis contends that organizations have resources, a crucial input that helps them to attain competitive advantage, and another subset that results in superior long-term performance, according to Barney (2018:9). Utilising a variety of other firm assets, including technology, management information systems, incentive structures, and management and labour trust, these resources are transformed into finished goods or services (Amit & Schoemaker, 2018:4). According to empirical data, the Zimbabwean government's activities toward beef

cattle SMEs did not take the worth of the resources into account, which accounts for the beef cattle SMEs' consistently poor performance. The researcher's fears and the low performance of Zimbabwean A2 beef cattle SMEs, as disclosed by academics and described in the literature review section, were both mirrored in the data that was gathered. The primary data results for both qualitative and quantitative study concur that the current strategic framework of Zimbabwe for beef cattle and other SMEs lack the government commitment, and this was elaborated by Majoni et al., (2016:7) who noted that:

> *Zimbabwe's policies are less supportive resulting in higher failure rate of SMEs in general, inclusive of beef SMEs. SMEs lack the access to business finance, skills and technology shortage, inadequacy or improper infrastructure, lack of managerial skills and SME failure is high in Zimbabwe because of poor training and monitoring of the sector by Government. The registration process for one to be considered an official SME in Zimbabwe is hectic and the requirements are difficult to meet*.

The findings from both the qualitative and quantitative data suggest that the A2 beef SME strategic entrepreneurial framework needs to be reconsidered in order to address the shortcomings of the current system.

Animal disease control

A2 beef SME cattle farmers concurred that the veterinary scientists are mandated to come and check on their animals for diseases. However, the study noted that their visits are infrequent and they often in hurry resulting in a number of issues remain unresolved. As alluded by Mumba *et al.* (2017) information regard good upkeep on beef cattle is of paramount importance to ensure the sustainability of the beef SME sector of any country. Disease control ensures the production of quality and marketable beef products and hence the sustainability the beef SME sector in the country.

A2 beef SMEs monitoring and evaluation

According to the study's findings, 87.1% of respondents said the local government doesn't have any monitoring or evaluation programs. This suggests that the government cannot assess the growth of the beef SMEs and that they are free to operate however they see fit. This is not consistent with the business's scientific management, which has given monitoring and evaluation programs a high priority. According to OECD/ETF/EU/EBRD, (2019:5) better monitoring and evaluation results in well-informed, evidence-based policy decisions that help SMEs perform better. Due to the lack of a framework for monitoring and evaluating

the beef SMEs, both excellent practices and flaws go unrecognised, which is detrimental to the sector's promotion.

Assistance in enacting the necessary operational infrastructure

The interviews conducted with the A2 beef SME farmers indicated that respondents generally have no proper infrastructure for their cattle fattening, dipping, drinking facilities, transport and communication network facilities, among other related infrastructural needs. The absence of such infrastructure is causal to substandard quality and quantity of final beef products. . In terms of proximity to the market, the study has shown that 90.6% of the respondents indicated that they are more than 10 km away from the nearest market for their beef cattle. Proximity to the market is one of the major factors to consider for the location of a business (Al Qur'an 2018:3). The same author alludes that there is a positive correlation between business performance and its proximity to the market.

Areas for improvement for the A2 beef SMEs to ensure sustainability

In line with the suspicions of the study which were raised at the begging of the research, the study found that the beef A2 SMEs are not up to the required standard in terms of the basic business acumen resemblance. The next sections are the specific areas for improvement that arose from the data obtained, analysed and presented in the study.

A2 beef SMEs' paradigm shift about their operations.

The A2 beef SMEs should shift their mindset to have a business mentality regarding their operations. This means that they should be driven by the national agenda mantra to spearhead beef production for national aspiration rather than just ownership of A2 pieces of land and cattle as a symbol of wealth.

Skills Improvement

As the study findings have shown, 95.9% of the respondents indicated that the government is not offering any trainings in record keeping. Furthermore, it was indicating that 97.1% of the respondents indicate that government officials are not even checking A2 beef SMEs for compliance with stipulated record keeping procedures. In the absence of government support, there are certain things which the A2 SMEs should be able to do on their own. In other words, they move away from the government dependency syndrome to self-empowerment to achieve their business sustainability. The findings have also revealed that there is little adherence to record keeping evidenced by the fact that 91.8% do not keep records at all or to so only to a limited extent. A2 beef SMEs' farmers need update their record keeping knowledge and skills and animal husbandry and they should commit their own financial resources to enhance their capabilities.

Livestock Selling Program

A2 beef SMEs should dispatch their animals to the market according to defined schedule and not just sporadically. The random selling of animals is not in line with proper business practice and hence it is a culture they should change for them to be entrepreneurially oriented. This enables them to plan their operations in terms of income and expenditure patterns.

Clear Visions and Goal

The study found that almost all the respondents expressed that they did not have either clear goals or concrete plans about their beef enterprises. For the few who some goals, they were not SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound). Without clear goals and concrete business plans, it is less likely that the beef SMEs will achieve the anticipated production and quality levels.

The development of the new A2 SME Strategic Entrepreneurship Framework

The participants expressed a strong desire to see a new A2 beef SMEs strategic entrepreneurial framework developed to address the misery of the A2 beef and other SMEs sectors in Zimbabwe. The interviewees were enthusiastic, and it became quite apparent that they were prepared to actively participate in the formulation of the new strategic entrepreneurial framework. The anticipated new A2 strategic entrepreneurship framework would have to address the shortcomings highlighted in this study with the aim to promote a productive, growth and sustainable beef SMEs sector in the country.

6.3 Chapter summary

The research findings and three essential concerns about SME performance brought forth by the participants were covered in this chapter. The government has failed to effectively inform the A2 beef cattle SME stakeholders about the SME policies, and its intentions regarding the A2 model of the Fast Track Land Reform Program in general and in relation to beef cattle farming have not been made clear. This is the first problem. The absence of government programs to provide financial assistance to SMEs is the second problem. This was shown in the underwhelming performance of Zimbabwean A2 beef SMEs, which is primarily a problem with the government's lack of commitment to supporting the SME sector in general and the beef sector. The third problem is that the government lacks capacity-building programs to boost the performance of SMEs, according to empirical data. The development of the new strategic entrepreneurial framework was the final problem. The new A2 beef SME strategic entrepreneurial framework, which has the potential to significantly impact the beef SMEs sector in Zimbabwe, will be covered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

DEVELOPED FRAMEWORK, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The previous chapter concentrated on the analysis and discussion of the findings based on the four objectives of the study.

This chapter outlines a strategic entrepreneurial framework that A2 beef SMEs in Zimbabwe can use to improve their performance. The framework is a tool developed to help beef SMEs on performance improvement, and it is based on the study findings already presented and discussed. The technique begins with a consultative phase in which all stakeholders in the formulation of a plan are included.

The findings of this study reinforce earlier literature on SMEs in Zimbabwe which found that A2 beef SMEs and all the SMEs in general lack the necessary skills, particularly the human resources management, marketing, financial management, animal husbandry, record keeping, others, to achieve the minimum acceptable performance. As Zindiye *et al.,* (2012:6) point out, insufficient management skills have a negative impact on the growth of the SME sector in Zimbabwe. The main goal of this chapter is to propose a practical, achievable, and client centred A2 beef cattle

SME strategic entrepreneurial framework that can help SMEs in Zimbabwe improve their operating conditions. Zimbabwe has abundant natural resources, a stable savannah climate, and a high literate population, all of which may be harnessed to foster significant SME growth.

Pillars of the new beef cattle SME Strategic entrepreneurial Framework.

The three major pillars of the new strategy framework will be the government, A2 beef SME operators, and general stakeholders (the community served by SMEs).

The Zimbabwean Government

The primary participant in the activities of the beef cattle SME strategy entrepreneurial framework, which aims to change the current organisations operating system into a more economically viable producing sector is the Zimbabwean government. The government gives the beef industry and other SMEs the resources and policy framework they need to function better. Nurul (2016:4) emphasized the government's role, stating that government policy provides a blueprint that emphasizes the government's strategy and initiative to their course of action, and that good government policy would help SMEs to succeed. The government provides the institutional environment for the performance of A2 beef SMEs, in line with the institutional theory's assertion that an institutional environment impacts an organization's performance (Havav, 2017:14). The government's dual role in the strategic entrepreneurial framework has a substantial impact on SMEs' capacity for innovation as a policymaker and a crucial resource provider (The Asian Development Bank, 2016:36). The Zimbabwean government should embrace or modify this viewpoint on SMEs and help them by creating policies and allocating resources to the beef cattle SME sector.

The A2 beef SME operator

The second crucial pillar is the A2 beef SME operator, whose success is directly influenced by government support. Generally, small, and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are the primary beneficiaries of the government's entrepreneurship-supporting initiatives. SME operators should be technically, and resource (human, financial, infrastructure) empowered by the government through a variety of actions towards their development. Zimbabwe can learn from Japan, which has 262 Kohsetsushi centers (public industrial technology research institutes) that offer a variety of services to Japanese SMEs, including technical assistance, networking, training, testing, analysis, and instrumentation, as well as access to open laboratories and test beds (Pergelova & Angulo-Ruiz, 2014:21). The success of the A2 beef SMEs depends heavily on the government's financial and other enabling environmental backing as well as a client-based SME strategy framework.

Other strategic stakeholders

The third pillar in the SME strategy framework is the general stakeholders, which include the public, SME sector employees, and SME sector suppliers of goods and services, all of whom are covered by the social entrepreneurship theory. The philosophy of social entrepreneurship is based on social focus that aims to improve the community's wealth and well-being for the common good rather than merely for the individuals. This group of people is involved in the daily operations of a small firm, either directly or indirectly. People who work in the SME sector will have more job security if it performs better. Consumers of SMEs' goods and services will be guaranteed of high-quality goods that are continuously improved via innovation, research, and development, and input suppliers to SMEs will have a more sustainable business. Khangarot (2019:17) claims that a variety of local stakeholders are involved in social entrepreneurship, including government officials, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, traditional and cultural leaders, people, and communities that must collaborate to address social issues. It is crucial to consider the general stakeholders who are supported by the social entrepreneurship theory while building a national SME strategy framework.

The three aforementioned pillars are the main participants in the SME strategic entrepreneurial framework, and because of the interdependence and intertwining of their operations, coordination of their actions is essential to the successful implementation of the SME strategic framework. They constitute a tripod structure (Figure 7.1), which must be a well-coordinated system for the SME strategy plan to be implemented successfully. The fact that the three pillars are a vital component of the functioning of SMEs, all tenets should be fully accountable for the resources entrusted to them. According to the respondents, a lack of resources and unequal resource distribution by the government is one of the main factors of subpar performance. Success stories of SME performance around the world, grounded by the resource-based perspective theory, are the core concepts that have unlocked prospects.

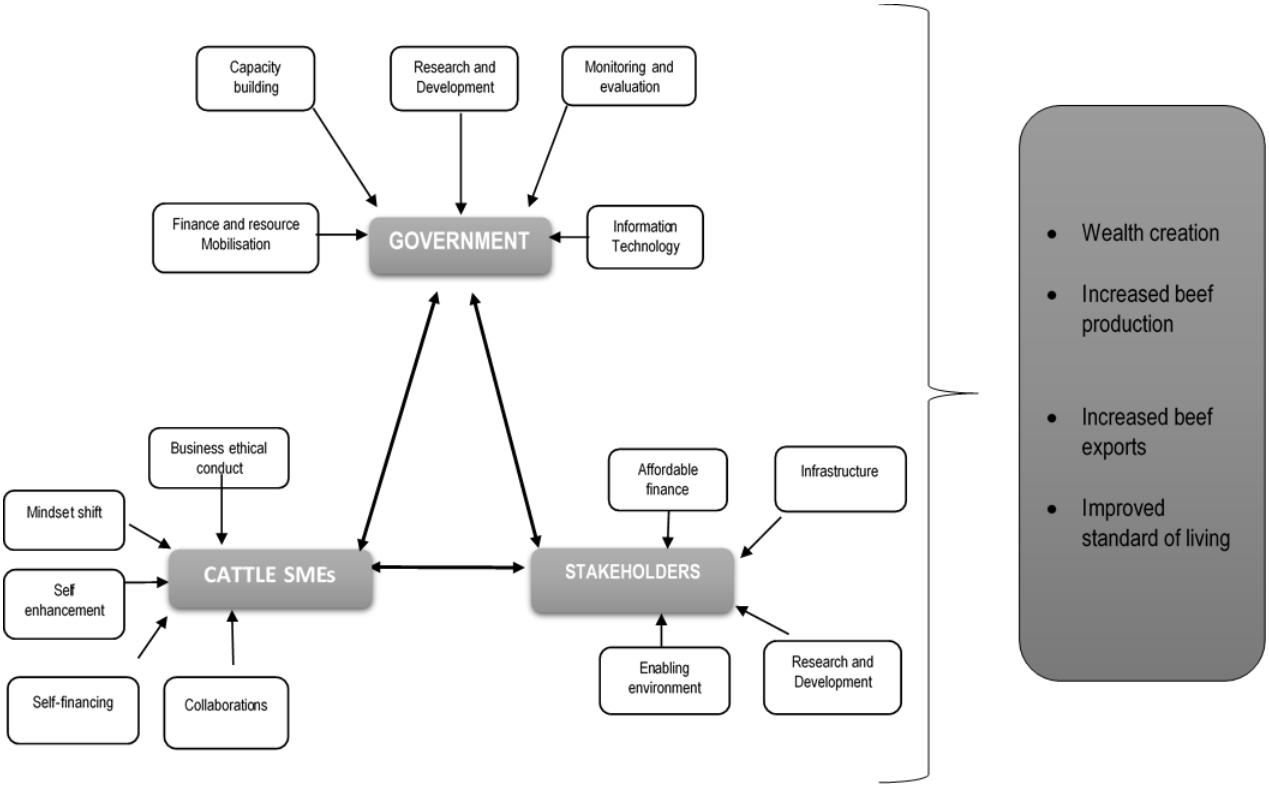

Figure 7.1: Pillars of the new Strategic Entrepreneurial Framework

The financial resources adequacy as the cornerstone of the framework.

A prerequisite for creating a long-term strategy framework that tackles the problems faced by beef cattle SMEs is the availability of financial resources. The RBV theory provides a framework for examining the financial issues these SMEs are facing. The resource-based view hypothesis, which highlights the abundance of financial, human, and social resources, may have an impact on entrepreneurs' capacity to meet both social and economic goals (Sieger *et al.,* 2011:47). an approach to entrepreneurship that places resources front and center as a deciding factor in an entrepreneur's success (Shepherd & Wiklund, 2005:21). It focuses on the possible impacts of plentiful resources on entrepreneurs' willingness to pursue both social and economic goals (Shepherd & Wiklund, 2005; Sieger *et al*., 2011:47). The ability to engage in entrepreneurial activity is significantly impacted by how well one manages one's financial, human, and social capital, according to all the writers (De Clercq *et al.,* 2013:7; Estrin et al., 2016; Hörisch *et al.,* 2017:16; Kachlami *et al.,* 2017:33). The government of Zimbabwe needs to accumulate the funds necessary to support its struggling SMEs.

Economies with a thriving SME sector have made significant financial investments there. Small enterprises must be able to raise capital if they are to succeed. This has been considered by the South African B-BEE

project, whose major goal is to boost SMEs' access to financing. The driving element behind SMEs' strong performance is their financial backing (DTI, 2007:21). In Malaysia, commercial banks account for 70.4% of working capital provided to SMEs, while Islamic banks receive 11.34% of this funding (Bhuiyan et al 2016:7). A plethora of financial intermediaries, including banks, leasing companies, guarantee funds, mutual guarantee institutions, promotional banks, and other financial intermediaries, make financing readily available to implementers, according to Kraemer-Eis *et al.*, (2019:34). According to reports, the European Investment Fund (EIF) significantly reduces the challenges SMEs encounter when trying to secure finance. The Zimbabwean government may substantially benefit from studying these countries in order to develop a comprehensive finance system for SMEs that is easily accessible, sustainable, and satisfies the SMEs' basic criteria.

The key facts show that the funding for the current policy framework is insufficient. 90% of those surveyed claimed that the nation had not provided financial help to SMEs (Table 6.23). 93% of poll respondents concurred with the interviews' findings that the government had not provided enough financial resources. The main cause of SME failure was the government's inability to secure financial resources. A reliable financial resource is necessary for creating an outstanding SME strategic framework. To promote SMEs, the government must reconsider its approach and gather enough financial resources. As a result, the British government must pursue enough financial resources with passion.

The strategic road map

Priority One

The government should follow the procedures outlined in the strategic road map in order to provide a framework for small and medium-sized beef cattle enterprises. The road map creates the basis of the SME strategy framework implementation since its benchmarks and indicators show the development and success of SMEs. Before releasing the SME strategy framework, which the public will view as a supplemental document, it will be important to identify critical issues the government should urgently resolve. All other procedures that must be carried out inside the SME strategy framework are guided by the strategic roadmap. The priority areas of the strategy framework are covered in the next section.

Making a Zimbabwean-based beef SME policy

To satisfy the needs of the implementers, the current A2 beef cattle SME policy has to be enhanced, updated, and adjusted. The ability to create legislation that aid in the growth of SMEs belongs to the government. For the government's SME strategy, the vision, mission, aim, objectives, and execution procedure should all be

made explicit. The plan should be highlighted in the policy, as well as how an effective policy may assist SMEs run more efficiently (Sahrom et al. 2016:29). In developed nations, SMEs have advanced, for the most part, due topolicies that supported their performance. Government policy has a big role to play on how well SMEs perform. Most economies' strategies should include the implementation of strong government policies for SMEs growth because it is crucial to their development, growth, and performance (Ifekwem, 2019:11). In this regard, Zimbabwe's SME policy should be modified to better serve SMEs.

The interaction between the government and the SME stakeholders throughout the creation of the policy framework is essential to policy ownership. Stakeholders will have a high level of trust in their government because of the incorporation of their ideas into the policy framework, leading to a major synergy between the government and the SME stakeholders. When evaluated from the perspective of the Local Production System (LPS), this strategy has been successfully applied in Brazil. The LPS approach is a framework for policy that aims to promote sustainable and coordinated development at the local, regional, and national levels through a participatory approach involving economic, political, and social actors who are all localized, involved in related economic activities, and displaying consistent processes of articulation, interaction, cooperation, and learning (Arroio, 2014:13). Zimbabwe's government is able to carry out a similar operation because it has a well-developed administrative structure that can be fully utilized at the national, province, district, ward, and village levels.

Since this program is the beginning of creating a strong link that will also attract investment in the SME sector, the government cannot afford to exclude players from the policy formulation processes. Until it creates a thorough plan for the Zimbabwe SME policy framework for its residents, the government will keep providing feedback to its stakeholders. Since their involvement in policy development will have been defined from the beginning stages of policy formulation and will be included in all stages leading up to the final SME policy document, SME stakeholders won't be shocked or taken aback by this new policy creation process.

Priority Two

The commitment of the government to support beef SMEs with resources

One of the most significant resources for beef SMEs has been regarded as financial aid from the government. The results of the studies conducted in the United States on the effect of government financial support on new firm performance show that government financial guarantees and government equity have a direct positive impact on new firm performance. These studies examined the effects of government financial support measures like loans, guarantees, and government equity on overall firm performance (Fernando et al.,

2014:15). A wide range of organizations, including stand-alone microlenders, community development banks, federal and state governmental entities, credit unions, and mutual fund associations, provide microfinance in the United States today. Traditional banks and Certified Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) collaborate with financial institutions to offer microfunds to their clients (Islamic Finance in the United States, 2018). The US government gave SMEs a lot of support, which led to the development of high-performing SMEs.

The contributions of SMEs to the economy of the Asian nations that have made considerable investments in the SME sector have shown that these investments have paid off. For instance, the Industrial Bank of Korea received a one trillion Korean won (US$750 million) investment from the South Korean government to expand the bank's investment base and increase SME lending to 12 trillion Korean won (US$9 billion) (Liang et al., 2017:3). Why their SME sector has done so well is due to the substantial support provided by the Korean government to SMEs. This level of dedication to the SME policy would be beneficial for Zimbabwe's government. It is necessary to have a robust resource mobilization effort.

The government should try to strengthen the infrastructure systems that support SMEs. Most respondents (96%) said that the feeder roads they utilize in their daily activities are in poor condition. Majoni *et al*., (2016: 383) reiterated these comments, stating that "infrastructure used by many SMEs in Zimbabwe is either old or unsuitable to accommodate the assigned SMEs."

The central government through its local authorities needs to make a commitment to improving the infrastructure system that supports small enterprises. SME businesspeople complained that their working conditions are appalling and that they frequently run out of water and power, a situation that hampers operations. Majoni *et al.,* (2016) elaborate on this issue and posit that poorly maintained public infrastructures like water and power have had a substantial negative impact on how well SMEs operate.

Priority Three

The government's initiatives to mobilize resources

Policy implementation into concrete action depends on the government's commitment to support the policies it has created. The government has a natural obligation to provide resources and help for a transformative effect on the communities it serves. The Zimbabwean government should begin resource mobilization efforts to ease the implementation of SME policies. The Nigerian government, which developed a comprehensive program for SME funding, is an example from which the government of Zimbabwe might learn. Omorogbe (2011:11) lists a few of the institutions and possibilities the government provides to aid SMEs in Nigeria in

obtaining funding which are the people's bank, National Economic Reconstruction Fund, Small and Medium Scale Loan Scheme amongst many others.

The programs were created to assist Nigerian SMEs, and as a result, Nigeria is now regarded as one of Africa's top performers in the SME sector. This is accomplished through the government's commitment to its SME policies, as well as the government's financial assistance, which has proven to be the cause of the SME sector's success in Nigeria which the Zimbabwean government may emulate. The government must undertake a comprehensive resource mobilization effort to give financial resources to SMEs. The government, through its structures, can devise various methods for securing resources through long-term fund-raising programs.

The government of Zimbabwe has launched effective AIDS levy programs in recent years, and in the same vein, the government can adopt SME levy program to assist the growth and development of SMEs. The Ministry of SMEs would oversee administration of the SME levy. To ensure a continual flow of cash to the SME sector, the country's national budget must set aside some resources expressly for it. In addition to the planned resource mobilization initiatives, the Reserve Bank and the Ministry of Finance should be more involved, and old mutual and foreign financiers should be requested to join the resource mobilization team. Many financial streams will provide money to the national SME fund because of the multi-sectoral approach to resource mobilization, and the SME sector will be funded.

Priority Four

Establishment of beef SME support structures.

The government must establish a parastatal inside of existing organizations to oversee the beef SME levy. This will be in line with the Asian Development Bank's (2016:21) assertion that government policy and the government itself have a strong influence on beef cattle SMEs' capacity for innovation and that the government has a critical role to play in every sphere of innovation, including access to finance and technology, capacity building and human resources, market links, availability of research facilities, and access to key information, among others. The minister of beef cattle SMEs will oversee the national SME sector, which will oversee setting up resource mobilization and finance, information technology, capacity building, research and development, and monitoring and evaluation. Each of these departments will focus on helping small businesses in a particular way. The proposed departments for the Zimbabwe beef cattle SME Sector are shown in Figure 7.2.

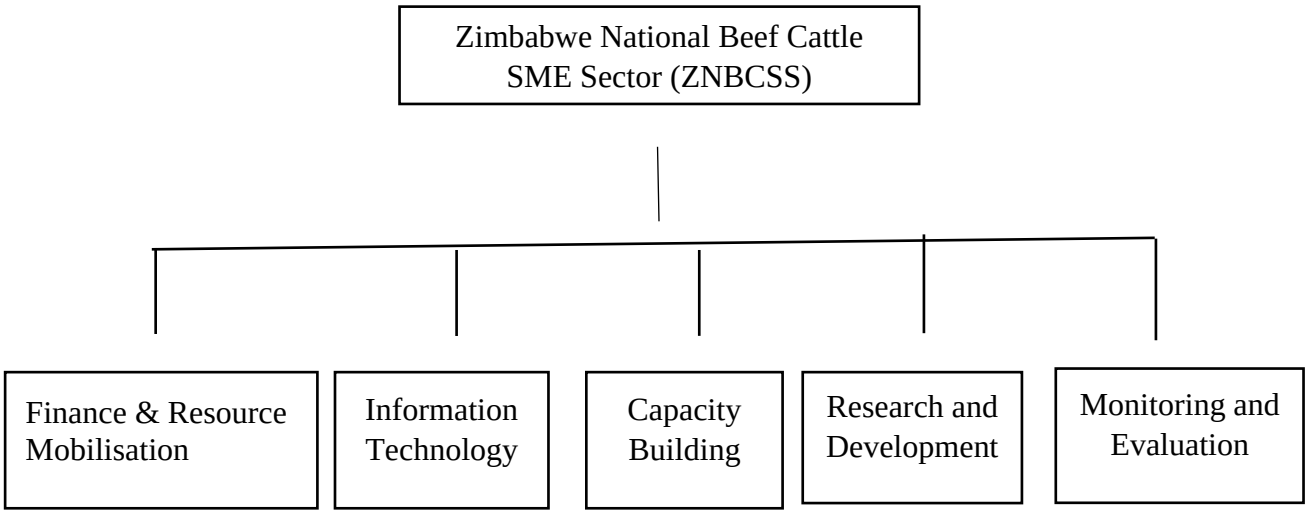

Figure 7.2: Suggested divisions of the new Zimbabwean beef cattle SME Sector

The chief executive of the national beef SME sector will answer to the minister of SMEs and the SME board of governors. To monitor the operation of the national beef SME sector, the government would create a board of governors. In the section that follows, titled "National SME Strategic Framework Implementing Recommendations," each department's duties are briefly described.

The Functions of the ZNBCSS Departments

The implementing guidelines for the national beef SME strategic entrepreneurial framework go over the tasks and responsibilities of each ZNBCSS department. Of the five departments, each has a specific function in helping SMEs perform better and they will be led by a skilled manager who will provide the chief executive officer with regular updates on the department's progress. The five departments will be reproduced at provincial and district levels to ensure adequate decentralisation of their operations. This will be in line with what (Panday, 2017:177-188) opined, that decentralisation of business operations enhances efficiency and effectiveness since a lot of bureaucracies are eliminated as a result.

The provincial office will report to the national office, and the departmental head will report to the chief executive officer, who will attend board of directors, overall SMEs heads at large and government meetings

to update them on the progress of the beef cattle SME sector. The district managers will have first-hand knowledge of what is happening among beef SME implementers and will relay this information to them. This reporting structure will guarantee that correct reports are delivered, and that each department is responsible for any activities undertaken in support of the beef cattle SMEs. This method uses an evidence-based approach to developing SMR programs.

The Finance and Resource Mobilisation Department

As was previously said, the most crucial component for SMEs to attain high performance is financial resources. The financial department oversees effectively and openly managing the financial resources of SME. According to the findings of the data gathered, SME implementers expressed dissatisfaction with the way the existing system handles the funding for SME projects. There are high rates of corruption, favouritism, and manipulation in the distribution of resources, according to survey participants who answered questions. These results will serve as safeguards against abuse in the implementation of financial schemes. The department will be held accountable for performing its duties professionally, and routine internal and external audits will be necessary. The department of finance and resource mobilization will house the departments of revenue collecting, disbursement, audit, and other departments. These will be expertly managed with basic accounting systems as a guide. All sectors will be under the direction of the finance and resource mobilization manager, a highly skilled professional with technical expertise of financial business administration. Due to the limited financial resources, this department is crucial to the implementation of the SME strategic framework, as shown by both primary and secondary data.

The Information Technological Communication (ITC) Department

information and technical communication (ICT) have connected the entire world through the internet in recent years, putting technological innovation front and centre in the global village. The field of social sciences in general and management, as well as a few other examples spanning a variety of fields, are the primary beneficiaries of technological innovations. Digital technologies and their applications are systematically changing established practices and causing new ones to emerge in various spheres of society (Fini et al., 2017:19). Digitalization has an impact on people's individual and collective behaviour, organizational strategies, practices, and procedures, industry dynamics, and entrepreneur competitiveness (Droll et al., 2017:44). Recently, it has become possible to discern patterns, behaviours, and activities in ways that were previously not possible because to remote sensing, mobile technologies, unique transaction systems, and high-performance computers (West et al., 2006:14). The literature states that creating a strong ICT

department is a crucial advancement in any economic sector, and the SME sector in Zimbabwe requires a strong ICT department.

In order to keep up with technological advancements, the Zimbabwean SME sector will establish a strong ITC department. There is growing evidence of entrepreneurs' growing use of WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, and other social networking sites that have the potential to connect local entrepreneurs with one another as well as the global village. For that reason, this department will need to be outfitted with cutting-edge ICT equipment and highly qualified professional ITC officers who will provide a system that will reach out to every beef cattle SME stakeholder at an affordable price. The ITC department could shift the beef cattle SME implementers' existing unfavourable perceptions because of the direct impact the changes they will make on their jobs, personal lives, and future. All stakeholders should be able to access SME information through the department, which will act as a hub for information distribution. When asked if the government disseminates information (gazettes, pamphlets, and leaflets) regarding the two policies, the majority of the respondents said, "Not at all," and hence this system will improve the existing situation. This state of ignorance will be a thing of the past thanks to the department that would have been set up to inform all parties.

The Capacity Building Department

The institutional theory is used as a lens to analyze how the environment influences an organization's ability for successful learning and long-term performance (Crews, 2010:13). Industry normative isomorphism is linked to professionalization, which is said to come about as a result of formal education, notably in universities and standard working groups where affiliations are common (Mushtaq, 2020:19). Learning has become the top business goal in terms of honing skills, extending the leadership pipeline, and boosting employee incentives (Xing et al., 2018:12). To create a productive learning environment that benefits all system participants, every business must reassess its learning environment and offer a new vision (Olivier & Page, 2017:43). The capacity building department will be built on the literature that the mentioned scholars have cited. For instance, the Indonesian government has built training centres for use by beef cattle SMEs, knowledge and technology transfer programs, training and expertise transfer, as well as physical equipment (machines and tools) (Handoko et al, 2019:16).

he Malawian Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurial Training Authority (TEVETA), the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Institute (SMEDI), and the Malawi Rural Development and Enterprise

Fund (MARDEF) are examples of public organizations the Malawian government is working to revamp and restructure in order to foster the entrepreneurial mindset of the populace (Ndala & Pelser, 2019:43). In order to strengthen the capacity building department, the Zimbabwean beef cattle SME capacity development department may need adopt concepts from Malawi and Indonesia.

Stakeholders at all levels should be the focus of capacity building. These stakeholders include SME implementation partners, policymakers, and decision-makers, should be supported via advocacy and education. Gender mainstreaming measures should be prioritized in all beef cattle SME programs and activities. It will be utilized to build a gender mainstreaming toolbox with gender-sensitive results indicators in addition to delivering the proper training and orientation on gender and SME operations. Professionals from the fields of finance, ITC, research and development, and monitoring and evaluation will work closely with this department. It will coordinate entrepreneur training initiatives and release educational materials to assist small and medium-sized enterprises. If a well-coordinated program is put in place, most entrepreneurs will gain skills in fields previously not covered by the current system, such as business management, financial management, marketing, and ICT. The department will be a part of the nation's entrepreneurial departments, which are made up of universities, Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurial Training Colleges, and other higher education institutions.

Building the ability of SME business operators will make it possible for implementers to be accountable to the government, their communities, stakeholders, and partners who have a direct or indirect relationship with SMEs. Capacity building will concentrate on leadership development, team building, the development of accountability systems and participatory decision-making arrangements (especially for SME owners and their employees), human resources management, and financial management to strengthen the credibility of SMEs in their attempts to improve the performance of their businesses.

The Research and Development Department

Any system that wants to keep up with the rapidly changing environment must now include research and development as a key component. According to Cohen and Levinthal (1990:13), entrepreneurs who invest in research and development improve their ability to adapt knowledge produced by other firms and can allocate some of their earnings to external investments in new information. Universities support innovation and entrepreneurial research and development. Governments in certain countries have made profitable investments in R&D.

The Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA) is a non-governmental organization that conducts policy research with the goal of influencing public policy and enhancing capacity (Khanie, 2018:4). Because it enables the government to be more objective in the conception, implementation, and evaluation of policy, the government of Botswana contributes to BIDPA's funding. Brazil's SMEs are performing better than ever thanks to the government's ongoing support and programs for research and development. SMEs made up about 52.5% of the workforce in Brazil in 2005. (Beck et al., 2005:18).

Establishing a research and development division that keeps up with the changing global environment is necessary for the SME sector in Zimbabwe. The department will have connections to institutions of higher learning, and funding will need to be made available for research initiatives in the SME sector. According to the endogenous growth theory, which contends that R&D expenditures and knowledge spill overs can result in high levels of innovation, increased productivity, and higher growth, this department will help SMEs expand (Romer, 1990:71). The R&D program will offer up performance avenues for SMEs that are not currently covered by the strategy framework.

Monitoring and evaluation Department

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of programs that provide advice for boosting the performance of SMEs must be included in a successful beef cattle SME strategic entrepreneurial framework. The department will create SME monitoring tools using data on the activities that beef SMEs do. According to (OECD/ETF/EU/EBRD, 2019:35), EU policymakers have developed SME monitoring and evaluation tools that include the following key programs that will be monitored: regulatory conditions for SMEs, enhancing regional cooperation in SME development, prioritizing women's entrepreneurship participation, and assisting SMEs to scale up to improve their competitiveness. The standards for the development of the beef cattle SME sector will be established by the monitoring and evaluation department. To create the beef SME performance M&E tools that will be printed and distributed to all SME structures, from the national office to the district offices, a stakeholder meeting will be called.

The development of a national monitoring and evaluation system is required, as well as the identification, documentation, and dissemination to all relevant parties of a set of core indicators. Additionally, a thorough M&E Plan for SME activities needs to be created. The goal of the national M&E system is to provide a thorough tracking system for gathering, inputting, analyzing, and exchanging data on SME performance that will enhance decision-making at all levels in the execution of interventions under the framework of the national SME plan. A national M&E work plan that specifically outlines agreed KPIs and M&E actions for the year will

be created in collaboration with all partners and distributed to all sectors. The strategy will outline the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in SME activities. All parties involved in SME activities' roles and duties will be described in the strategy. It is crucial to develop a consistent monitoring and evaluation mechanism at all levels and to schedule and attend meetings with stakeholders to discuss plans. Strengthened M&E systems along with facilitative supervision would promote accountability in service delivery and improved performance of SMEs.

The SME strategic framework rollout programme

The next step is to introduce the SME strategy framework to the public through a rollout program once the government develops a national SME policy, a strategic road map, supporting infrastructure, and implementing guidelines. When presenting the strategic framework to those who would accept, own, and support it since they were involved in all phases of its construction, the government must follow a set of coordinated sequential actions known as the rollout program. The sequential tasks that must be carried out as part of the rollout program are described in detail in the following sections.

SME stakeholder engagement

The idea of a single beef cattle SME strategic entrepreneurial framework must have the support of all parties, which necessitates extensive consultation. Meetings will be held to discuss the concept, design, and strategic direction of the common beef cattle SME strategic framework platform, the formation of an all-inclusive stakeholder team to review and document the precise information system requirements for the beef cattle SME sector, the request for technical assistance, the purchase of corporate utility tools and software, and the training of ITC department staff to manage the software.

Stakeholder engagement with individuals who are representative of all stakeholders involved in SME activities is essential to the operationalization of the strategy framework's success. According to data collection statistics, SME operations are dispersed throughout the nation. The first phase entails setting up meetings with local leaders to explain the government's goals and highlight the advantages of the program, notably in terms of job creation, government help through financial resources, and community development through SME activities. The community's business leaders, SME implementers, and everyone else participating are invited to the follow-up meeting with the local leaders. The public will be informed of the agenda at all meetings, and attendees will be made aware of the government's objectives to support SMEs in local communities. The fact that most of the respondents had never heard of the government's indigenisation and industrial aims shows that the shortcomings of the administration will be addressed in

these sessions. Stakeholder engagement is the government's entry point; if the community is on board with the program, they will own and support it, ensuring its success.

Policy awareness campaign program

The government will communicate with the public and disseminate the SME plan framework using community leaders. The survey participants admitted that their business activities did not follow any formal policy framework. Are the two policies your guiding principles in your daily operations? Only of the beef SME owners adhered to the policies. This indicates how infrequently the government carried out public awareness campaigns. Local people will take the initiative in identifying existing and future SME operators to close this gap, and the government will notify all stakeholders through local officers.

With the assistance of local leadership, the government will select local volunteers who will be trained to oversee awareness campaigns. The volunteers will be able to explain the SME policy in both English and the local tongue, ensuring that everyone is aware of the framework for the SME plan. As compensation, the volunteers will receive travel motorcycles, allowances, and the chance to register any potential SME stakeholders, which will result in the construction of a national SME database. The government will start a material dissemination program for information, education, and communication after the awareness campaign (IEC).

Information Education and Communication (IEC) dissemination

All those with an interest in SMEs can benefit from the detailed exchange of policy information and the SME strategic framework thanks to the distribution of information, education, and communication (IEC) tools. Respondents to the survey were questioned about whether their organizations had copies of the policies. And most of them were not even aware of the policies, let alone having copies. The research shows a comparatively low rate of information dissemination by the government. IEC materials must be produced in big quantities. To create the IEC materials, the information technology department works in conjunction with other departments. To enhance awareness and access to information on policies and how to seek government aid, the ICT department will develop standard information packages that will be distributed to all levels of the community. The government will leverage community-based volunteers to spread information with the aid of local authorities. The government is certain that persons who are interested in the SME program would study the information packs because Zimbabwe has a high literacy rate.

As effective and efficient means of communication, print and electronic media will both be employed to disseminate information. Through all channels available, the public will be informed about the framework for

the national beef cattle SME plan. Weekly radio and television broadcasts will be distributed to the entire population, and print materials such flyers, news bulletins, billboards, and posters will be used during beef cattle SME awareness campaigns and any community meetings. The Zimbabwe beef cattle SME Strategic Entrepreneurial Framework requires a dynamic strategic information system to assist with program planning and implementation, direct policy, measure the SME performance, identify gaps and emerging needs, develop solutions to fill gaps and meet needs, and continuously assess and improve actions to ensure accountability and effective national participation of all potential entrepreneurs.

Roll out of the SME work plans

Stakeholders who will submit reports on time should be involved in the rigorous costing and discussion of the annual beef cattle SME work plan. This strategy will make sure that funds are allocated on time and in accordance with the work plan. The Zimbabwe beef cattle SME strategy framework, which outlines the activities to be taken and the responsibilities to be assigned, will be used to create annual operational plans. These action plans contain matrices containing the following data and a narrative that describes the situation:

- OUTPUTS: These are the expected outputs that are important to SMEs' success.
- ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS: These are the actions and procedures that any SME intervention should follow, as well as an indication of where/what they should lead to.
- RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION: This will highlight the sector and agency responsibilities, where several stakeholders find a niche in improving SMEs' performance.
- TIME-FRAME: This specifies how long the projected intervention program will take to implement over the 12-month planning timeframe.

- INDICATORS: Identify or provide evidence of implementation, success, or both, as it relates to the process, the results, or both. The yearly work or operational plan will significantly aid in the monitoring and evaluation of SME performance.

The Management, Coordination and M&E of the National Beef Cattle SME Strategic Entrepreneurial Framework.

According to the national SME strategy framework, the ZNBCSS will create the coordinating structures and procedures needed for the community to effectively respond by becoming entrepreneurs. To enable efficient collaboration, the ZNSS will decentralize structures at the provincial, district, and ward levels. The

management of the government's duty to improve SME performance falls under the purview of the SME sector in Zimbabwe, with a particular emphasis on the development of national SME policies, partnerships, resource mobilization, monitoring, evaluation, and levy administration.

The Zimbabwe Business Coalition on SMEs, the Zimbabwe Association of Cross Border Traders, the Zimbabwe Indigenous Business Community and the Indigenous Businesswoman of Zimbabwe, and the Zimbabwe Business Coalition on SMEs, which coordinates the private sector's SME activities, are a few of the coordinating organizations that will be involved in the national response to improve SME operations in Zimbabwe. These registered business entities, which house most SME operators, will effectively act as partners with the government in collaborative efforts.

The Implementable Zimbabwe National Beef Cattle SME Strategic Entrepreneurial Framework

The above-mentioned strategic framework has been condensed into a working document (Figure 7.1) that implementers can utilize to put the policy on paper into action. The activities, objectives, and strategy to be used are all laid out in the action oriented strategic framework. It also clarifies the key output metrics that demonstrate the expected outcomes. The accountable authority identifies who will carry out the work and leads to the office where the reports are filed.

Resource mobilisation

The first port of call would be to realign the beef SME policy with the aim of developing a home grown and people-oriented policy through consultative meetings with all stakeholders to get their views leading to the formation a new beef SME policy. This is done by the relevant government officials who then report to the relevant minister and the president by and large. The government must come up with resource mobilisation strategies to amass resources to empower beef SMEs with. They can be done through the introduction of SMEs levy, banking sector taking the lead in financial resources mobilisation with the national treasury also providing resources through the fiscus. The ministry of SMEs must work closely with the ZNSS in the execution of this project. The parliament portfolio on SMEs must at the forefront in monitoring and giving the relevant feedback to parliament and the presidium.

Financial resources

The objective in this regard is to provide resources to all A2 beef SMEs that need such. This could be done through the development of a database containing all beef SMEs followed by the develop of a selection plan

for the SMEs and the relevant distribution mechanisms coupled with the audit, monitoring, and evaluation systems. The Zimbabwe National Ministry of SMEs must be mandated and have oversight of such operations.

Capacity Building

Implementers need to be trained in various areas of empowerment need. This must be done through the needs assessment criteria upon which all the training priority aspects are assessed, and a periodic training program drawn. The program must be communicated to all stakeholders after which the relevant training programs are rolled out with up to standard monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Information Technological Communication (ICT)

There is necessity to establish an ICT department for rapid communication purposes to keep SMEs on pace with technological developments in their space. This must be augmented with the establishment of a wide internet coverage to support the beef SMEs website. This culminates into the promotion of SMEs social activities and interaction as groups through social media, sharing important information.

Research and Development.

A beef research and development program must be established at every agricultural oriented institution of higher learning and must be adequately funded and equipped. Beef research and development in such institutions must mandatory. The beef research and development office must be established within the ZNSS with direct accountability to the SMEs ministry.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

The national beef SMEs strategic tool for monitoring must be established. There is need to develop and quarterly, biannually and annual monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. A national five-year beef SME strategic M&E plan must be implemented as well, and the relevant reports also produced. The government itself must oversee this through the Zimbabwe national beef SME in conjunction with the government itself.

The Staged National Beef SME strategic framework rollout program

Stage 1: Beef SME stakeholder engagement

There must be the engagement of all the stakeholders into dialogue about the whole beef SMEs strategic entrepreneurial framework. Discussion of the roll out plan and the recording of views from the stakeholders. The stakeholders get informed about the plans of the government regarding the beef SME sector followed by the evaluation of the level of comprehending the new policy and its objectives. Capturing of the views of stakeholders must be done with feedback given back to the stakeholders regarding the government's plans.

Continuous evaluation of the levels of understanding of government policy and objectives is done continuously. This is done by the ZNSS in tandem with government officials.

Stage 2: Policy awareness campaigns

The essence of this campaign would be to disseminate information from the government on the beef and other SMEs policy. It is imperative for government to have meetings and workshops with the leadership of beef SMEs in their respective areas. Of necessity is the formation of beef SME task forces at provincial and district levels. At each meeting held, evidence of such must be produced in the form of minutes and reports of deliberations and decisions made. Everything that happens in that space must be known to the relevant ministry.

Stage 3: Information Education and Communication (IEC) dissemination.

This relates to the distribution of policy information to all SME stakeholders via the SME task force and elected authorities. Volunteers distribute IEC products, such as T-shirts, caps, hats, and brochures, to all stakeholders. The ministry of SMEs, in collaboration with ZNSS, would oversee the production of M&E reports at all levels.

Stage 4: SME Roll out of the SME work plans.

The implantation phase happens after the strategic entrepreneurial plans are launched. At this point, the pertinent SME activities related to resource mobilization and distribution, capacity building, M&E, R&D, ICT, and general stakeholder support would be put into practice with feedback coming from M&E programs. At this stage, operational plans are developed following the Zimbabwe beef SMEs strategic operational plans with funds being disbursed with training also being conducted together with R&D and M&E implemented well supported by ICT department with all these activities being accountable to the ZNSS and the relevant ministry.

Stage 5: Management coordination and M&E of the ZNSS.

This happens at this stage in a bid to strengthen the ZNSS at all structures and systems for an effective by the SME community. There is also the decentralization of the structures at provincial and district levels. The ZNSS coordinates the required national response to improve the beef SME performance in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Coalition of SMEs, the Zimbabwe Association of Cross-Border Traders, the Zimbabwe Indigenous Business Community, and the Indigenous Businesswomen of Zimbabwe are some examples of the business

partners with whom the beef SME stakeholders have strong ties. Meetings are held frequently to discuss the implementation process, evaluate progress, and report to stakeholders. Officials from M&E are continually outfitted to maintain capabilities.

The SME structures must be functional at all levels and the coordinating committees are established by ZNSS at all levels coupled with the establishment of team building programs with the stakeholders. At this stage, stakeholder committees are established, and program review meetings being held with accountability going to the ZNSS and the government itself.

STUDY CONCLUSIONS

Summary

This study's main objective was to present a framework for strategic entrepreneurial activity that Zimbabwe may employ to boost the performance of SMEs. The study's objectives were to ascertain whether Zimbabwe's government framework offers the right resources for A2 beef SMEs and what should be covered in the new policy framework to boost their performance. The paper recommended policy changes that Zimbabwe may use to increase the sufficiency of resources for SMEs.

The idea of strategic entrepreneurship is introduced in the first chapter. Additionally, it describes the entire fast-track land reform procedure, which began in 2000 and resulted in the creation of the A1 and A2 models of land redistribution. It describes the steps that Zimbabwe consciously took to support A2 beef SMEs who were program beneficiaries as part of the hope for the beef industry's and the country's economic survival, and it has seen the emergence of SMEs in every area of the economy. In the first chapter, it was further examined how the discourse of strategic entrepreneurship has evolved. SMEs in industrialized countries have advanced thanks to policies that supported the growth and development of SMEs and defined crucial ideas. The researcher paid particular attention to the idea of strategic entrepreneurship framework, which is deemed to be relevant in terms of its significance towards the study's primary goal, in creating a SME strategic entrepreneurial framework that Zimbabwe can use to improve the economic condition of its beef industry. The major goal of the study, which instructed this study to synthesis a robust SME strategic entrepreneurial framework, was followed by the secondary goals that led to the creation of research questions.

Chapter two contained a comprehensive evaluation of the relevant literature that was related to the objectives. Selected nations from the European Union, the Asian Tigers (India, Indonesia, China, Malaysia, Japan, and South Korea), developing nations, the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), and various African states were all examined in relation to each of the four objectives. The overall

performance of SMEs and their economic contributions to various states were studied in the first section. In both developing and established countries, SME success is widely viewed as a key factor in encouraging economic growth and employment creation (Ariyo, 2008:31; Kpleai, 2009:40, Birch, 2011:27; Storey, 2014:21). Edom et al. (2015:7) contend that SMEs performance is a source of pride in almost every country or state due to the critical roles SMEs play in the growth and development of varied economies. The government of the day must constantly monitor and support SME performance since they are a global force to be reckoned with. The beef SMEs, the subject of this study, are among this plethora of SMEs. Nations generally have overall SME policies covering all sectors of their economies with very little or narrowing down to the specific micro sector, and hence the researcher's approach of looking at literature pertaining to overall bigger picture SMEs.

The second portion looked at how government policies affected SME in general and beef cattle SMEs in particular performance. Most economies' strategies must include the implementation of strong government policies for beef cattle SMEs growth because it is crucial to their development, growth, and performance (Ifekwem, 2019:65). Beef cattle SMEs have had little options to increase their growth and performance without government aid programs. Government policy is reflected in strategic plans and policy documents, which are then translated and put into practice by rules and regulations, manuals, requests for proposals, contractual agreements, and enforcement actions (Ifekwem, 2019:65). In developed nations, SMEs in general and beef cattle SMEs in particular have advanced thanks to policies that supported their performance. In this aspect, the government's policy is quite important.

The third phase examined how government resources affected the performance of beef cattle SMEs. Government agencies have a big impact on how well SMEs in general function. The government has a duty to contribute resources and work toward making sure that the policies it implements have an impact on the communities it serves because it is the architect of those policies. Government funding has long been regarded as one of the most important resources for the success of SMEs. The ability of small enterprises to raise money is essential to their success.

Discussed also are the qualities of a successful SME strategic entrepreneurial framework. The implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of initiatives targeted at enhancing the performance of SMEs will be aided by a sound SME strategic framework. Many governments, stakeholders, and international organizations have successfully used a range of strategic frameworks to enhance the performance of SMEs

and other organizations. Examples have included the European Union, some Asian nations, the BRICS, and some African nations.

Chapter three focuses on the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. Zimbabwe SME policy framework as a tool for empowerment is elaborated. It presented the Beef Sector Policy as a tool for empowerment. It further expatiates on the impact of environmental factors impacting on the beef cattle SMEs. The theoretical framework paying particular attention to four theoretical aspects which underpin competitive advantage, i.e., networking theory, organizational theory, resource-based view and dynamic capabilities theory of entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurship and strategic management theories are discussed in conjunction with the development of the strategic entrepreneurship theory entrepreneurship which is understood today as the foundation of the entrepreneurship and strategic management in combination.

In this study, the research methodology is significant since it affects how the data was collected and analysed. The detailed research procedure is discussed in Chapter four. This research study took a hybrid strategy, employing both positivism and interpretivism in its qualitative and quantitative methodologies. In this study, the two techniques were combined and used. The data was first gathered through interviews, then analysed and some themes were developed, which were then utilized to create the questionnaires that were used to gather information from SME implementers.

Chapter 5, which demonstrates how the data was presented and analysed, is one of the most important components of this study. This chapter presents the results of the questionnaires and interviews. The material from the interviews was combined under the principal subject, and from the data, other subsidiary themes were developed. The findings of the questionnaires and the respondents' response rate were recorded. The results were broken down into three categories in accordance with the goals of the study: responses on the entrepreneurial orientation and culture of the current A2 beef cattle SMEs, how government policies affect SME performance, responses on government technical support mechanisms, and responses on what should be included in the strategic entrepreneurial framework for beef cattle SMEs.

The analysis and discussion in Chapter 6 were divided into three sections: the government policies and their impact on the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe; the extent to which the government framework provides sufficient resources for SMEs; and what should be included in the policy framework to enhance SME operator performance.

The analysis and discussion in Chapter 6 were divided into four sections: the entrepreneurial orientation and culture within the beef cattle SMEs, the government policies and their impact on the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe; the extent to which the government technical support mechanisms provide such support to the beef cattle SMEs; and what should be included in the policy framework to enhance beef cattle SME operator performance.

The researcher's objective in this study was to develop a strategic entrepreneurial framework that Zimbabwean beef cattle SMEs could use to change their current business operational system into a more economically viable productive entity that could be used as a project in the region and elsewhere.

Conclusions from the secondary research

The researcher found in chapter two that the SME policy in general and the beef SMEs policy in particular, is a great weapon that may be used to empower indigenous people. The indigenisation program has been embraced around the world as a means of redressing political, economic, and social imbalances of history. According to the literature, the United States of America, Russia, Columbia, Indonesia, India, Mexico, and Bolivia have all effectively adopted and executed indigenisation programs. It has been applied in Africa in Zambia, Nigeria, Malawi, Kenya, and South Africa, where the B-EEE program was undertaken to address this aspect.

The United Nations developed 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with Goal 8 promoting local people's empowerment through job creation and long-term economic prosperity for all. The Africa Agenda 2063 symbolizes a determination by Africans to take charge of their own destiny and work toward poverty eradication, long-term sustainability, and African empowerment. According to the leadership of both the United Nations and the African Union, empowerment is at the top of their agendas. Strategic entrepreneurship is a key component of any nation's economic growth and development, according to the literature. Entrepreneurial adds to a country's economic performance, so empowering indigenous people to participate in entrepreneurship activities produces jobs, fosters information sharing, and contributes to the country's economic progress. An increase in the number of entrepreneurs leads to increased economic growth through improving the performance and general quality of entrepreneurial capacity.

The Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), according to the researcher, is a comprehensive tool that analyses the microeconomic and macroeconomic underpinnings of national competitiveness and has indicated that Zimbabwe's score on the GCI is among the lowest. According to the literature, the policy and the FTLRP which gave birth to the A1 and A2 models failed to create beef SMEs as the backbone of the Zimbabwean

economy, and they also failed to strengthen the country's economy, since Zimbabwe's economic position has deteriorated dramatically since the formation of this and other indigenous policies. This is alluded to by Block (2013), who claims that Zimbabwe's empowerment approach has harmed the country's capacity to attract foreign direct investment.

From the three theoretical viewpoints, entrepreneurship, institutional, and resource mobilization theories, the researcher came to the following conclusions in chapter three: The theory of entrepreneurship is based on the belief that the concept of entrepreneurship is a key to progress in the economic, social, political, and artistic sectors, as well as in all other aspects of life. Entrepreneurship is an economic process that has long been regarded as a key engine of economic growth in developed countries, transition and emerging economies, and developing countries such as Africa.

Institutional theory is used to better understand how the environment of various business infrastructure effects an organization's ability to learn effectively and enhance its performance. The institutional theory emphasizes the importance of the institutional environment in influencing the performance of organizations, and it is concerned with how groups and organizations manage to exist and operate legally by following the laws. Learning, according to Geels (2004), entails the reproduction or transformation of cognitive, normative, and regulative skills through imitation or the interchange of experiences within the environment.

The resource-based view (RBV) has become one of the most dominant theoretical approaches, based on the core concept that organizations compete on their resources and capabilities. The key tenet of this idea is that a company's competitive advantage is determined by its ability to deploy internal resources. Entrepreneurs' readiness to address both social and economic objectives may be determined by a resource-based perspective that focuses on the abundance of financial, human, and social resources.

Conclusions from the primary research

The outcomes of the interviews and survey are used to derive inferences from the primary research in connection to the study objectives. The significance of these results for Zimbabwe's economy is that a homegrown strategic entrepreneurial framework that can be executed by Zimbabwean A2 beef SMEs is required to contribute towards turning the country's economy around. The findings of the main research show that Zimbabwe is not making full use of its natural resources to boost beef and other SMEs' performance. Zimbabwe, which is rich in natural resources such as minerals, wildlife, fertile soils, and the Savannah Climate, which provides excellent farming conditions and is supported by a population with Africa's highest literacy rate, has enormous potential to transform the country into a prosperous nation.

Objective One: Assessment of the entrepreneurial orientation and culture

The researcher concluded that the A2 beef cattle SMEs generally don't have the entrepreneurial orientation and culture that resonate with being the people to drive the commercial beef cattle agenda of the government. True to the suspicion of the researcher that most beef cattle SMEs don't take beef cattle farming as a business but a pass time. Furthermore, the researcher underlined that much as beef cattle farmers are natural businesspeople, the A2 beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe it takes to fit into that slot. The fact that they generally have such a lacklustre approach to their operations, in which they have a general disregard of record keeping basic, personal capital raising and general social responsibility indicates how generally disoriented they are.

Objective Two: Government policies

The researcher came to two conclusions about how government policies affect the performance of small businesses. To begin with, the A2 beef SME implementers have minimal awareness of Zimbabwe's indigenisation and empowerment policies, as well as the industrialisation efforts targeted at promoting SMEs. The government has no structure in place to spread information about the policies in the form of leaflets, brochures, fliers, or billboards. Users were not given access to the policies, and no printed or electronic resources were given to A2 beef SME implementers. The government does not consult with the A2 beef SME implementers; instead, it functions solely from the office and employs a desk-top approach to policy implementation. The two policies did not provide much advantage to the implementers, and their operations are not governed by them. In a nutshell, the Zimbabwean government failed to put what it had developed into reality, resulting in the dismal performance of the A2 beef SMEs.

Secondly, government policies in Zimbabwe have relatively little impact on the success of A2 beef SMEs and SMEs in general. The government has made no policy commitments to provide the technical help that implementers require so much, and it has no adequate and sustainable programs to foster research and development. The government does not have any forums that encourage knowledge sharing, such as sectoral groups or networking committees for peer training and education. It does not include adequate support for beef SME operations such as product promotion, access to fuel and energy, or duty exemptions on inputs.

Objective Three: Government technical support on SMEs

Based on this goal, the researcher believes that the government does not provide adequate support to the A2 beef SME sector. In terms of skill training, financial assistance, and general business support, there was

very little help. The beef SME implementers reported that the government did not provide much help in terms of skill training to this SME operators. The government did not provide any training schedules to the SME implementers, and they did not receive any training at their workplaces. The implementers had hoped that the government would assist them in improving their performance through capacity building programs, but this was not the case. Aside from a lack of support, the government failed to appoint local training officers to help the implementers. The government lacks a website that details its programs, as well as contact information for beef SME implementers. According to the study's findings, the governments and beef SME implementers' responsibilities are fragmented, and the implementers receive no government training, meaning that capacity-building initiatives in the beef SME sector are non-existent.

The government does not provide any financial aid or training in financial management to the beef SMEs. The beef SME implementers are unaware of any government-sponsored funding opportunities. Most implementers did not receive any funding from the government, and those who did received some funding complained of highly strict measures coupled with laborious and highly bureaucratic paperwork, favouritism, and some corruption activities by government officials. The distribution of money is unequal, and there are no clear processes in place to handle SME funds. The SME owners received no training in the financial management system, even though they needed to improve their financial management skills. The study concludes that the government failed to develop a training program for the implementers, putting the beef SME implementers at a significant disadvantage in their financial records management systems.

The established that government support for beef SMEs is often poor, and that most implementers are ignorant of any SME government support channels. The government has taken no steps to reduce the tax rates paid by SMEs in general. The government does not prioritise beef SMEs when it comes to supplying the basic agricultural business needs. For the performance of beef SMEs, the government has no monitoring and assessment programs in place. The researcher determined that the government lacks mechanisms to assist beef SMEs in areas such as finance and resource mobilisation, ICT support, monitoring and evaluation, research and development, infrastructure support and other forms of business assistance.

Objective Four: Components of the strategic entrepreneyrial framework

The researcher finds that the implementers have a wealth of expertise about what should be included in a new strategic entrepreneurial framework for beef SMEs in Zimbabwe. The government's goals and mission on beef and other SMEs, according to the respondents, should be presented to all stakeholders through

conversation at all levels, including local leadership. The government should hold more consultation sessions to encourage cluster groupings, marketing, and gender mainstreaming in SMEs programs.

According to the respondents, the government should be accountable and transparent at all levels, have zero tolerance on corruption, fraud, and tribalism, and have less paperwork and bureaucracy when it comes to obtaining government resources. More training in skills development should all be prioritised, according to the respondents. The government should establish offices for the Ministry of SMEs at all levels of government. The government should include a plan for annual training programs, as well as national and regional exchange sector programs, in the new strategic framework for SMEs in Zimbabwe. The respondents responded that they would like to attend national, regional, and international SME exhibitions in order to better their business and performance. On SME challenges, the government should establish linkages with the global village. The researcher finds that the respondents have many relevant comments on what should be included in a new strategic entrepreneurial framework for beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe, which are not included in the current framework, based on what has been expressed by this aim.

Objective Four (B) Recommended beef SME policy changes

It is suggested that the government go back to the drawing board and design a revised policy that is developed with the input of all beef SME stakeholders. The resource mobilisation-oriented all-inclusive strategy requires the government to enter communities, hold meetings with all local leadership structures, and involve beef cattle SME implementers through debates, interviews, and focus group discussions on various SME sectors. This procedure will enable the government to sell the concept to all stakeholders and collect ideas from those who will embrace the new policy and take ownership of the program, which they will continue to support.

The government lacks the resources to support SMEs in general, according to primary empirical data. It must be deeply involved in the resource mobilisation process in order to provide financial resources that are critical to the SME sector's enhanced performance. The government, through its structures, can devise various methods for securing resources through long-term fund-raising programs. The government must enact a national beef SME charge, which will account for most of the SME fund. The national budget will also provide financial assistance to SMEs. The government will need to establish a resource mobilisation unit that will research, document, and implement all conceivable financing streams that can help the beef SME sector. The management of a small business's financial resources must be done properly and transparently. All

stakeholders, from local implementers to national officials, as well as the foreign community, should have faith in the SME fund's management in general, which will attract investors from all over the world.

The researcher suggests that the government safeguard ICT resources for small businesses. To stay up with technological advancements, it needs to build a strong ITC department. Entrepreneurs are increasingly using WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, and other social networking sites to connect with each other, partners, and stakeholders who support their enterprises. Human resources must be equipped with concepts and knowledge that will aid in their performance improvement. In order to boost output, the government must implement capacity building programs that target all SME players and all departments.

Recommendations

The results of this study showed that although the government created policies to improve the performance of SME in general, these policies lacked financial and technical support. The implementers underperformed in relation to their talents, demonstrated a lack of comprehension of the policies, and received scant support from the administration. The implementers feel that with more government commitment, they will be able to perform far better than they are now.

In summary, the study finds that the beef cattle SME sector can make a significant contribution to the country's economy by improving performance, creating jobs, raising the standard of living in local communities, providing adequate meet and related products which currently is in short supply in the country, reducing poverty, and increasing GDP contribution. Something urgently needs to be done in order to put this purpose into action. This requires the government to recommit supporting its policies and provide the necessary resources to implementers.

Recommendations on the new policy and strategic entrepreneurial framework

It is suggested that the Zimbabwean government refocus and develop a resource-oriented policy, which will be supported by a strategic entrepreneurial framework that will put the new policy into action. The new policy and strategic entrepreneurial framework will be inextricably connected, with the strategic entrepreneurial framework assisting the policy. The strategic framework will reflect the new policy that has been formulated. The two texts will work in tandem and complement one another.

Recommendation on the development of the policies that positively influence the performance of beef SMEs in Zimbabwe.

It is advised that the government connect its policies with the needs of the country for beef SMEs to contribute to increased performance, job creation, and poverty alleviation. This must be accomplished through a thorough consultation process involving all beef cattle SME stakeholders. The government must visit local areas, conduct a needs assessment, hold discussions with SME implementers, employees, and other stakeholders such as community leaders and suppliers in each location, and incorporate their findings into the new policy framework. This procedure will result in a Zimbabwean beef SME policy that is owned by both the government and the SME stakeholders.

Recommendation on the development of a strategic entrepreneurial framework that is resource oriented for the performance of beef cattle SMEs in Zimbabwe.

A strong financial resource is a major requirement towards establishing a commendable beef cattle SME strategic entrepreneurial framework. It is recommended that the government develop robust resource mobilisation programmes that continually supply the resources to the beef cattle SMEs. The resource mobilisation process must be extensively done by the government, which must involve all the stakeholders in the financial sector including non-governmental organisations, World Bank, African Development Bank and the local banks.

Recommendation on what should be incorporated into the strategic framework that improves the performance of beef cattle SMEs

It is recommended that a new strategic entrepreneurial framework should contain the views of all the stakeholders. It will be an all-inclusive policy that will have been developed through the concerted efforts of all the stakeholders. After the government has put together the home-grown strategic beef cattle SME policy, it will develop the strategic road map, establish the support structures and develop the implementing guidelines which provide the model that will be adopted by the strategic entrepreneurial framework rollout programme. The strategic entrepreneurial framework will contain the logical processes that have to be followed by the stakeholders and each participant of the programme will be well informed about all the contents and the procedure of implementing the strategic plan.

Recommendation on the future research areas

The study has revealed some fresh research areas that need to be investigated further. More study is needed in the field of beef cattle SMEs' skill development. Human resources, marketing, financial management, and

general management abilities are all lacking in Zimbabwean beef SMEs. There are several study areas in the field of skills management that are still unexplored in SMEs research. Monitoring and evaluating beef cattle SMEs need more research; it is crucial for SMEs' success, but little research has been done in this field. More research is needed in the domain of resource mobilisation approaches to help beef cattle SMEs, particularly in developing nations. There have been several studies on the effects of resources on the performance of SMEs, but there has been little research on the process of resource mobilisation. The planning of SMEs' activities is critical, and more research is needed in this area. If additional study is done in the grey areas stated, the strategic entrepreneurial framework will be strengthened, and SMEs will be able to achieve higher levels of performance.

Chapter summary

The researcher has brought all components of the study together in this chapter, from chapter one to chapter seven, and drew conclusions from both secondary and primary data because both data sources supplied evidence to address the research objectives. The secondary data contained recorded information from linked literature, whilst the main data contained empirical evidence from Zimbabwe's selected SME implementers. To give guidance, recommendations have been made to address each of the study's objectives, and a path forward has been suggested for each of the stated recommendations. The recommendations identified topics that should be explored further in the future and laid the groundwork for future studies on SMEs' policies and performance.

The evidence based national A2 beef SME strategic entrepreneurial framework for Zimbabwe was discussed in this chapter. Stakeholders, government backing, frameworks, and implementation guidelines were all discussed. It also detailed the steps the government will take to distribute the SME strategy entrepreneurial framework to the public. The necessity of resource mobilization, management, coordination, and M&E execution as the primary activities that hold the success of the national SME strategic framework to contribute to urning around the country's economy was discussed in detail in this chapter. The literature on SMEs, the theoretical framework, and the results of the researcher's survey influenced the development of the beef SME strategic framework. The study's important findings in relation to the research questions, the researcher's contributions to the study, the recommended suggestions and their implementation, researcher thoughts, and the scope for future research deriving from the study's limits were outlined.

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