

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Economic challenges faced by wool and mohair farmers in the Leribe district of Lesotho

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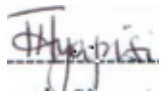
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2024

DECLARATION

I, Thabiso Wilson Nyapisi, declare that:

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to our late daughter – Tlotliso Nyapisi.

ABSTRACT

Sourced primarily from sheep, wool is a valuable textile fibre used across the world for clothing, carpets, and upholstery among others. This makes wool a significant resource for many industries worldwide. Globally, the wool industry has an important value of approximately two (2) million tons of wool that are being sold and bought yearly (World Atlas, 2022). The wool and mohair industry therefore plays a pivotal role in Lesotho's economy as a key contributor to its Gross Domestic Product. This adds significantly to Lesotho's agricultural exports, especially for a country that has a long history of sheep and goat husbandry.

The purpose of this study therefore is to investigate the economic challenges faced by wool and mohair farmers in the Leribe district of Lesotho and how that has impacted the industry broadly. This study adopted a qualitative research approach with semi-structured interviews conducted with thirteen (13) respondents. This research study drew a sample of wool and mohair farmers from the Leribe district in Lesotho as study participants until data saturation was reached. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select study participants.

The study revealed that despite being such a big industry, economic challenges faced by wool and mohair farmers include uncertainty in the sales of wool and mohair, delayed payments from the wool broker, uncertain distribution of wool and mohair, and political influence. It was revealed by this study the delay impacts negatively on the livelihoods of sheep and goat farmers as it becomes difficult to buy medication and vaccines for their flock and sustain their livelihoods.

This study therefore recommends that the farmers should be fully involved in all fundamental phases of the production of wool and mohair chain such as shearing, classification, weighing, and auctioning of their products. The government of Lesotho should position itself in a manner that supports the wool and mohair farming industry.

Keywords: Wool; Mohair; Farmers; Sheep; Goats;

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Sourced primarily from sheep and goats, wool and mohair are a valuable textile fibre used across the world for clothing, carpets, and upholstery among others. Sheep and goats are domestic animals that are raised on farms and backyards for their wool, mohair, meat, and milk (International Wool Textile Organisation, 2022; Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). Sheep and goats are sheared seasonally by farmers to take their wool and mohair for processing. The type, length, crimp and quality of wool and mohair are other factors concerning their usefulness. For instance, coarser wool is used to make carpets, furnishings, curtains, and bedding while finer wool is used for clothing (International Wool Textile Organisation, 2022). This makes wool and mohair significant resources for many industries across the globe. Internationally, the wool industry has an important value of more than \$30 billion, with approximately two (2) million tons of wool being sold and bought yearly (World Atlas, 2022). The wool and mohair industry therefore plays a remarkable role in Lesotho's economy and is one of the largest producers globally, which translates into 12% of the country's GDP (Lesotho Budget Speech, 2020/2021; Bloomberg, 2021). The sector is therefore an important contributor to Lesotho's agricultural exports especially for a country that has a long history of sheep and goat husbandry (Khotso, 2020).

The history of Lesotho's wool and mohair dates to the 1800s when the nation's Merino sheep have been producing high-quality wool and its Angora goats have been producing mohair of finer fabric quality (IFAD, 2022). Despite being such an important industry, most of Lesotho's wool and mohair farmers have experienced economic challenges, which include the distribution of wool and mohair after shearing their sheep and goats, delays in payment of sales from the wool broker and difficulty in purchasing vaccines and medication for their flock. The level of involvement by the government of Lesotho in the wool and mohair industry has been a concern for the farmers too as shall be revealed in this research study. Thus, it should be noted that in developing countries including Lesotho, many of the farmers and their households reside in rural areas and agriculture especially animal husbandry serves as their main source of income and poverty alleviation strategy (Motsoari, 2012; Khotso, 2020).

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore the economic challenges faced by wool and mohair producers or farmers in the Leribe district of Lesotho and how this impacts the industry broadly. This introductory chapter introduces the main research questions underpinning the study including the research problem. The aims and objectives of this research study will be covered and a section on how the entire research study is organised or structured will also be discussed in this chapter.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Wool and mohair are the main agricultural exports for Lesotho (Khotso, 2020). Despite being at the core of subsistence and social support for many in the rural areas, the wool and mohair sector is faced with several economic challenges. The challenges include the delays of payments from the sale of wool and mohair by the brokers, distribution of wool and mohair and the difficulty in purchasing medication for the flock. This, therefore, negatively affects Lesotho's rural economy and national agricultural sector exports and the industry at large.

The researcher's motivation to choose to study research in this area stems from his personal experience of living amongst the sheep and goat farmers in the rural village of Tsikoane, Leribe Lesotho. The farmers had for many years relied on the sale of wool and mohair to sustain their families (paying school fees for their children, purchasing groceries) and flocks (buying meal supplements and vaccines).

1.2 Research Questions

The following are research questions underpinning this research study:

- What are the economic challenges faced by wool and mohair farmers in the Leribe district of Lesotho?
- How has the delay of payments in the sale of wool and mohair affected the farmers?
- What is the impact of the recent wool and mohair regulatory framework on the farmers?
- What are the challenges the farmers faced in the sale and distribution or transportation of their wool and mohair production?

- What are the farmers' views on the role of the Lesotho government in creating a conducive business environment for the industry to thrive?

1.3 Objectives

This study aims to investigate the economic challenges faced by wool and mohair farmers. The objectives of this research are as follows:

- To investigate the economic challenges faced by wool and mohair farmers in the Leribe district of Lesotho;
- To investigate how delays in payment of the sale of wool and mohair have affected the farmers;
- To assess the impact of the newly enacted regulations on the wool and mohair industry;
- To explore the challenges faced by the farmers in the sale and distribution of their wool and mohair; and
- To ascertain farmers' views on the role of the Lesotho government in creating a conducive business environment for the industry to thrive.

1.4 Research Assumptions

The following are assumptions for this research:

- That the Lesotho wool and mohair industry is faced with economic challenges;
- That the newly enacted Wool and Mohair Regulations 2018 has adversely affected the industry;
- That delayed payments from wool and mohair broker negatively impact farmers; and
- That the government has an important role to play instead of supporting monopolistic brokering in the sale of wool and mohair.

1.5 Contribution of the study

This research aims to highlight key economic issues that are pertinent to the wool and mohair industry in Lesotho. The study draws value on the fact that this is one of the main industries in the country as more than 70% of Lesotho's two-million population living in rural areas rely on livestock for subsistence and economic survival (World Bank, 2019; IFAD, 2022; World Vision,

2023). The wool and mohair industry employs about 75, 000 herd boys who are mostly illiterate and often given animals as a form of payment or compensation for their service (Lesotho Times, 2016; World Bank, 2019; IFAD, 2022). This research will contribute to the generation of knowledge that will be important to informing policy strategy and direction in the wool and mohair subsector.

1.6 Lesotho Country Profile

This section provides a brief profile and overview of Lesotho as a country, which is critical for a contextual understanding of this research.

Lesotho is a small, mountainous, and landlocked country, which is surrounded by a bigger and larger South Africa as its neighbour (World Bank, 2022). Lesotho is one of the smallest countries in the world in terms of population size and its unique geography. It has an elevation of between 1500 m and 3482 m above sea level (World Bank, 2022). It is divided into four agroecological regions and 10 administrative districts (see **Figure 1** below).

The country had a population of around 2.2 million and a nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of \$1, 091 in 2021 (World Bank, 2022). It is classified as a low-middle-income country and is mostly highlands as its lowest point is 1, 400 meters above sea level. Lesotho is a constitutional monarch that gained independence from Britain in 1966. The Prime Minister is the Head of the Government and the Monarch is the Head of the State. It is governed by a 33-member Senate and a 120-member parliament (National Assembly) (World Bank, 2022). Below is a picture depicting Lesotho on an African map.

Figure 1.1: Lesotho Country Profile



Source: On The Map (2016)

The first picture (on the left), from Figure 1 above shows the Leribe district of Lesotho (coloured in red) which is an area under study. Leribe is one of the ten (10) administrative districts of Lesotho. The second picture (on the right), in Figure 1 above shows the location of Lesotho on the African continent map circled in red with an arrow pointing at it.

Four regions make up Lesotho; the lowlands which are about 17%, Senqu River Valley at 9%, Foot-hills at 15% and lastly, the Highlands at 59% which is mostly mountainous area (Cauley, 1986; Mekbib, Olaleye, Massia and Wondimu, 2015). It should be noted that most of the mountainous areas are rural and because of the terrain, they are not easy to reach. That is where most of the farmers have their grazing post due to the good pastures for their flock. According to Maqalika (2020), it is the altitude and latitude that determine Lesotho's climate as its geographic position affects the sub-tropical high-pressure zone. Such climatic conditions in the highlands are deemed favourable for sheep and goat farming because of the arable land and grazing lands found in such areas (Motselebane, 2010; Maqalika, 2020). Lesotho's temperature drops to as low as $-11\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ in the Lowlands and $-21\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ in the Highlands in extreme winter (Lesotho

Meteorological Services, 2020). In such weather conditions, the mornings are generally frosty with low temperatures in the highlands for most of the time.

1.7 Clarification of Concepts

This section provides clarification or definitions of key concepts that are integral to this research study.

a) Goat: “It is an animal related to a sheep that usually has horns and beards. Goats live wild on mountains or are kept on farms to provide milk, meat, wool, [and mohair], etc.” (Online Cambridge Dictionary, 2022:36). Picture 1 below shows goats in a kraal in Leribe.



Picture 1: Goats in a kraal. Picture. **Picture Credit:** Lloyd Phillips (2019)

b) Sheep: defined by Cambridge Dictionary (2022) as a farm animal with thick wool that eats grass and is kept for its wool, skin, and meat. Below is Picture 2 which shows a sheep and its lamb in the snow in Lesotho and Picture 3 below shows a grazing flock of sheep.



Picture 2: Sheep and its lamb in snow Lesotho. **Picture Credit:** IFAD (2019).



Picture 3: A herdsman herding a flock of sheep. **Picture Credit:** IFAD (2019).

c) **Wool:** refers to a valuable fibre produced by sheep that is used across the world to make clothing, carpets, and upholstery (International Wool Textile Organisation, 2022). The coarse wool is used to make beddings, curtains, and carpets while the finer wool is used to make clothing (International Wool Textile Organisation, 2022). Picture 4 below shows a caption of raw

wool after being sheared from sheep classified and then stored at a Semonkong shearing shed, in Lesotho.



Picture 4: Raw wool at a Semonkong Shearing shed. **Picture Credit:** SemonkongLodge Facebook page (2021).

d) Mohair: like wool, mohair is an important fibre that is used throughout the world to make clothing, blankets, and fleece (International Wool Textile Organisation, 2022). However, the difference is that mohair is sourced primarily from goat. Picture 5 below shows a caption of a goat being sheared.



Picture 5: A Goat being sheared at a Shearing Shed. **Picture Credit:** Lesotho Times (2019)

e) Wool and Mohair farmer/producer: For purposes of this research, a farmer or producer of wool and mohair refers to an individual in Lesotho who rears or owns Merino sheep and/or Angora goats for meat and shearing to generate income.

f) Shearing shed: This refers to a place or site where sheep and goats are sheared, and wool and mohair are stored before sales or transportation to the broker can take place. Below is Picture 6 depicting one of the Shearing sheds at Qholaqhoe village in Lesotho.



Picture 6: Qholaqhoe Shearing Shed, Lesotho. **Picture Credit:** WAMPP (2020).

1.8 Organisation or Structure of the research report

This section provides a logical breakdown of the structure of this study. Chapter two (2) below, focuses on reviewing literature that is pertinent to this research study. Before drawing on the history of the wool and mohair industry in Lesotho, the literature review chapter discusses the global trends of wool and mohair. With over 70% of Lesotho's population living in rural areas, farming including rearing Merino sheep and Angora goats remains the main livelihood activity (The Lesotho Review, 2018). This is central for subsistence purposes for a country with an unemployment rate of 27% (Trading Economics, 2019). However, severe drought, economic

depression-induced price falls in wool and mohair, degradation of land, livestock theft, and goat and sheep population, which fell by almost half in the past decade are some of the challenges the industry is faced with (New Agriculturalist, 2018). Additionally, productivity decline, a decline in the proportion of households owning livestock, stock theft, degradation of pastures, and uncontrolled grazing remained other challenges facing the sector (New Agriculturalist, 2018).

Chapter three (3) of this research study deliberates on the methodological approach adopted by this research. This study is an exploratory study that adopted a qualitative approach of obtaining empirical first-hand evidence on the economic challenges faced by wool and mohair producers in Lesotho. Primary data was collected through conducting in-depth interviews with wool and mohair producers who were study respondents. Secondary data were collected from books and online journal articles. A judgemental or purposive sampling technique was employed to select study participants. The limitation of this research approach was that a quantitative method may well be considered suitable for this type of study, however, a qualitative approach enabled the researcher to interact with respondents to obtain in-depth information about their experiences as producers of wool and mohair. The interviews with the respondents were recorded on a recorder or Dictaphone with their consent to capture the conversation verbatim. This was important for processing data and is discussed in detail in chapter three (3). The study participants in this research took part voluntarily and anonymously and chapter three (3) discusses the main ethical considerations of the study.

Further, chapter four (4) provides detailed findings and data analysis that were guided mainly by research questions with reference from the body of existing literature. Data analysis techniques were drawn from the methodology chapter wherein the main emerging themes were grouped and analysed as discussed in Chapter 4.

Lastly, chapter five (5), which is the concluding chapter covers the main conclusions and recommendations of the study based on the objectives and findings of the research. This last chapter is instrumental in informing the conclusion and recommendations of the entire research

study about processed and analysed hard evidence obtained from the ground. This also informs the direction that future research may consider.

1.9 Limitations of the study

Below are the limitations of this study:

- The study is limited to the Leribe district of Lesotho;
- The study sample is selected from members of LNWMGA only as other non-association farmers were not included; and
- The study adopted a qualitative methodological approach. A quantitative approach would still be appropriate for the study.

1.10 Conclusion

The majority of the sheep and goats live in small to large herds that are managed by rural small-scale farmers. The role of such farmers forms a very important basis for Lesotho's rural economy. Most rural households in developing countries including Lesotho depend on agriculture for subsistence (Khotso, 2020). Thus, households raise their livestock which includes sheep, goats, and cattle for meat, milk, wool, and mohair among others. As a result, agriculture serves as the main source of income and poverty alleviation intervention for the majority of rural households in developing countries (Motsoari, 2012; Khotso, 2020). The wool and mohair industry in Lesotho is one of the pillars of survival for most of the farmers in Lesotho's rural areas. As briefly highlighted in this chapter, the industry is confronted with several economic challenges that seem to be a stumbling block for it to thrive. This study aims to investigate the economic challenges faced by wool and mohair farmers

This chapter has provided a breakdown of chapters including the methodological approach employed in this research. The next chapter discusses literature review that is pertinent to this study.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the literature review pertinent to this study. Firstly, it focuses on the wool and mohair global trends and then puts a specific focus on the historical background of Lesotho's wool and mohair industry. Secondly, the current developments and issues affecting the industry were also discussed. Lastly, the policy developments in so far as the government is involved in regulating the industry were also covered.

It is worth noting that it is significant for critical conversations by all stakeholders including the government of Lesotho to deliberate on a working economic approach that is beneficial to producers of wool and mohair as the industry has proven to be highly politicised in recent years.

2.1 Wool and Mohair Global Trends

Wool and mohair, as mentioned in the previous chapter, are valuable textile fibres across the globe. The primary source of both wool and mohair are sheep and goats. The industry is considered giant-sized as several resources including clothing, beddings, and carpets among others are made from wool and mohair.

There are approximately two (2) million tons of wool and mohair being sold and bought on an annual basis (World Atlas, 2022). Australia is the largest producer of wool around the globe with over 345 million kilograms every year which is about a quarter of the world's wool (Australian Government, 2021). Australia exported \$3.8 billion worth of wool between 2017/18 and 2019/20 and that declined to \$2.7 billion in 2020/21 because of the COVID-19 pandemic that affected production (Australian Government, 2021). The main importers of Australian wool between 2018/19 and 2020/21 have been China (82%), India (4%), Italy (4%) and the Czech Republic (3%) and have been driven by demand for woolen-made attire such as sweaters, coats and suits in China, US and EU markets (Australian Government, 2021). Australia is followed by China, Russia, New Zealand, Argentina, South Africa, the UK, and Uruguay (Woomark, 2022).

According to Lesotho's Wool and Mohair 2020 Report, Lesotho produces about 3320 tons of Merino-type greasy wool and 750 tons of Angora-type greasy mohair. Lesotho has become the second leading mohair producer in the world after South Africa. It means smallholder and subsistence farmer producers are at the heart of wool and mohair production. Lesotho can access wool and mohair international auction markets (Port Elizabeth and Durban) and distribution networks of South Africa which is ranked 12th and 1st in the world for wool and mohair production respectively (Lesotho Wool and Mohair Report, 2020).

Additionally, Khotso (2020) maintains that the wool and mohair subsector of Lesotho's economy has over the years remained quite significant as most of the sheep and goat farmers in mountainous areas of the kingdom of Lesotho depend heavily on the sale of wool and mohair as a source of their living and economic purpose. The subsector generates foreign revenue through the export of wool and mohair to the international market thus contributing substantially to Lesotho's Gross Domestic Product (Lesotho Budget Speech, 2021/2022; Nkuebe, 2020; Khotso, 2020).

2.2 Lesotho's Wool and Mohair Historical Background

United States International Trade Administration views Lesotho's economy as mostly export-driven with economic sectors including manufacturing, mining, agriculture, and services. The major export products are garments, diamonds, water, electricity, wool, and mohair (International Trade Administration, 2021).

The production of wool and mohair in Lesotho can be traced as far back as the 1850s, almost two decades after King Moshoeshoe I founded Basotho nation (Hunter & Mokitimi, 1990). This was after "Basotho acquired woolled Merino sheep through labour migration and employment on South African sheep farms and, sometimes, through stock theft" (Hunter & Mokitimi, 1990:2). The Merino breed for sheep found its way into the mountain kingdom of Lesotho in the 1850s when migrant Basotho working at white settler's farms based in the Orange Free State bought them and others were paid instead of their wages (Hunter & Mokitimi, 1990:17). It is also

thought that Angora goats found their way to Lesotho from the Eastern Cape where they mostly originated, through the same manner (Hunter & Mokitimi, 1989).

The main motivation for the acquisition and farming of sheep was for cash income purposes that farmers gained from wool sales as the prices of wool were relatively high on the international markets at the time (Hunter & Mokitimi, 1989). While mohair production remained behind, the end of the 19th century marked a transformation era of both sheep and goat flocks and farming from traditional meat production to Merino sheep and Angora goat breed (Hunter & Mokitimi, 1989). The sales of wool and mohair have remained one of Lesotho's largest exports for over 100 years (Lesotho Times, 2018). For many decades, the wool and mohair industry has been the only earner of foreign capital in the agricultural sector (Bureau of Statistics, 2001; Jordan, 2004). For many farmers in Lesotho, wool is also the only source of cash income (Tsoanamatsie, 2003; Moteane, 2003; Jordan, 2004). It therefore means that wool and mohair sales remained the main source of income for the majority of farmers who live in the deep rural areas of Lesotho.

Furthermore, the WAMPP/IFAD (2020) report suggests that the wool and mohair industry plays an important role to over 250, 000 households living in the rural areas through their participation in the commodity chains. That is, the industry has considerable potential to alleviate rural poverty including food insecurity in the mountain kingdom (Machete, 2004; WAMPP/IFAD, 2020). Khotso (2022) also shares the same sentiments that the rural economy is boosted among others by the sale of wool and mohair as the majority of farming families living in rural areas depend on them for their economic survival. That is, some of the agricultural activities that these farmers engage in include ploughing in the fields; and raising livestock for meat, milk, and other significant commodities like wool and mohair in the case of sheep and goats (Khotso, 2022). Over the years, agriculture has been the main source of income, especially for rural households in developing countries and arguably critical for poverty alleviation (Motsoari, 2012; Khotso, 2022).

In terms of animal population, there are over 1.2 million Merino sheep and 845, 000 Angora goats in Lesotho with over 40, 000 farmers ranging from smallholder (with small flocks) to main

breeders herding large flocks farm mainly superior gene-quality animals' herd. It should be noted that one Merino sheep yields around three (3) kilograms of wool, and one Angora goat produces one kilogram of mohair on average (IFAD, 2019). It means the industry of wool and mohair in Lesotho has significant potential to grow as it makes a substantial contribution to Lesotho's rural economy. Wool is one of the most used commodities around the world as it ranked the 5th largest export in Lesotho (IFAD, 2019).

There are efforts by the Wool and Mohair Promotion Project (WAMPP) of Lesotho, working together with stakeholders in the government, private sector, and farmer groups and individuals to improve the quality and quantity of both wool and mohair (IFAD, 2019). These efforts include enhancing better communication with farmers, animal nutrition, animal health and livestock extension services, and access to basic services (clean running water at shearing sites), among others (IFAD, 2019).

Moreover, Lesotho's main agricultural exports are wool and mohair with Lesotho being the world's second largest producer of mohair at 14% after South Africa (Rath *et al.*, 2014). In the year 2016/2017 Lesotho's wool sales amounted to R480 million (Bloomberg, 2019). Thus, Lesotho's wool and mohair industry remains one of the economic role players in the country's economy. It is estimated that 40, 000 wool and mohair farmers shear their 1.25 million Merino sheep and Agora goats and have their fleece marketed on the international market (Budget Speech, 2019/2020; Mokhethi *et al.*, 2016). It should also be noted that well over 70% of Lesotho's population lives in rural areas, farming including rearing sheep and goats remains the main livelihood activity (The Lesotho Review, 2018). This is central for subsistence purposes for a country with an unemployment rate of 27% (Trading Economics, 2019). Lesotho's agriculture is mainly based on livestock and crop production with fertile lands based in the lowlands and foothills (Mokhethi, 2015). However, soil erosion remains a huge problem due to floods, over-farming, and lack of sufficient trees (Mokhethi, 2015). According to the Wool and Mohair Project document (2014:43), Lesotho has less than 301,000 hectares of cultivable land which is predominantly pastoral.

Despite all the challenges facing this industry, sheep and goats continue to play a crucial role in the rural economy while cattle are important in traditional exchange processes such as marriages and other celebrations (Wool & Mohair Project Document, 2014:43). Thus, they are at the forefront of household defence against hunger and malnutrition, and they can be sold to buy food (Wool & Mohair Project Document, 2014:43).

2.2 Lesotho's trade relations

South Africa remains the main trading partner of Lesotho where the former supplies well over 80% of its imported goods and services to the latter country (Lesotho Budget Speech, 2019/2020). Lesotho's central location in Southern Africa plays a major role as it frames its economic development in Southern Africa. The country is a member of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), the Common Monetary Area (CMA), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) among others. Both SACU and CMA are the main influences on trade, exchange, and monetary policies of all member states (Lesotho Budget Speech, 2019/2020).

2.3 The Certification, Selling, and Buying of Wool and Mohair in Lesotho

The sale of wool and mohair is conducted through a national association (Lesotho National Wool and Mohair Growers Association) with South African Broker BKB Ltd, which provides the government of Lesotho with aggregate statistics regarding sales by district and grade (Lesotho Wool and Mohair Report, 2020). One of the challenges facing the wool and mohair industry is that, it cannot develop an independent database regarding total production, benchmarking, market development, and certification (Lesotho Wool and Mohair Report, 2020). However, according to data provided by BKB, the average production of wool is 3kg for sheep and 1kg for goats.

It should be noted that Merino sheep and Angora goats provide raw materials in the form of wool and mohair for cottage industries and niche market purposes. Thus, the sale of such products is generally viewed as a significant source of short-term cash needs for farmers and their families to cover school fees for children, medical bills together with household needs (Lesotho Wool and

Mohair Report, 2020). It therefore plays a significant role in alleviating poverty and creating jobs. Nevertheless, the monopolistic system allowed South Africa's BKB to be a sole broker that took Lesotho's wool and mohair from farmers and sold the same at an international auction on their behalf and then came back to pay them as per farmer's wool and mohair weight/mass. Fortunately, this practice which continued for more than 40 years was recently halted by the Lesotho government in 2018 (IFAD, 2019).

According to the WAMMP/IFAD 2020 report, over four decades, channels and strategies of marketing wool and mohair together with exporting the produce out of Lesotho have been closely intertwined with those of South Africa. This means that both the marketing system and value chains have been so wide-ranging that wool and mohair purchased from Lesotho were brokered and auctioned in South Africa mainly by BKB (WAMPP/IFAD, 2020). The challenges arising from this practice included that the deductions from the earnings of farmers were excessive, tax accruing from the sale of wool and mohair was not refunded to Lesotho's National Treasury, and there was little value-added activity in the industry in general (WAMPP/IFAD, 2020).

In an attempt to curb or combat government concerns and localise the industry, the Agricultural Marketing (Wool and Mohair Licensing) (Amendment) Regulations No. 37 were introduced through the government Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in 2018. The developments brought about by these regulatory changes included that the issuance of export licenses to private companies was done on condition that wool and mohair were prepared, brokered, traded, and auctioned in Lesotho (Agricultural Marketing (Wool and Mohair Licensing) (Amendment) Regulations No. 37; WAMPP/IFAD, 2020). In turn, this had an impact on the already existing channels of marketing and value chains that have a history of decades in practice. On the ground, farmers experienced even further delays in payments for the sale of wool and mohair, which negatively impacted their livelihoods (WAMPP/IFAD, 2020). This setback was felt throughout the industry. It was uncertain how this piece of legislation should be implemented and there was a feeling among those concerned that it negatively impacted the investment and may lead to the migration of farmers and private companies from the sector that took many years to organise

(WAMPP/IFAD, 2020). Despite the unintended outcomes of the changes in regulations, this opened a window of opportunity to strengthen the marketing systems in Lesotho and enhance value chains and localisation of the programme among others (WAMPP/IFAD, 2020).

The new approach and structures such as WAMPP have brought some significant pillars that strengthen and support wool and mohair farmers to enhance quality through several ways including easy access to weather and climate information via short message services (SMS) (IFAD, 2019). This is crucial, especially for the farmers situated in the highlands where extreme weather conditions are common. They get warnings about unfavorable weather conditions such as heavy rains, snow, and hail to help them make informed decisions in such circumstances (IFAD, 2019).

According to the Government of Lesotho 2022/2023 Budget Speech, the government aims to assist wool and mohair farmers to improve production, quality, quantity, and value of fibre in the international markets through “procurement and allocation of improved Merino rams and Angora bucks to beneficiaries under the culling and exchange programme,” (Lesotho Budget Speech, 2022/2023:14). The Government of Lesotho, as per 2022/2023 Budget, has committed to procure improved sheep and goats to improve production and productivity which will in return enhance quantity and value of the fibre in the international market (Lesotho Budget Speech, 2022/2023:23). Such government commitment to support wool and mohair industry shows that there is a huge potential for growth in the industry given the global demand for wool and mohair. More so, it is important for such government initiatives, once implemented, to reach even the most rural farmers who make a huge contribution to the industry.

In a study conducted by the European Union, on request by the Lesotho Government, it was concluded that although establishment of a certified wool testing laboratory and gaining accreditation required buy-in from all stakeholders if it were to succeed (European Union, 2022). The study further advocated for digitising production, classing records, investing in professional human resources, establishing of unified auction system, and coherent wool handling logistics and certification of wool as other factors that needed to be considered to overhaul the wool

industry (European Union, 2022). As it is currently, sheep and goat farmers get their animals sheared and wool and mohair transported to a South African broker who sends them money once such products have been sold at the international market, as discussed in this research report.

2.4 Industry Current Debates

The current tension between the government of Lesotho and the wool and mohair over economic policy uncertainty because of the newly promulgated Wool and Mohair Regulations of 2018 has added more woes to the already challenged industry (Lesotho Times, 2019). For the past four decades, wool and mohair farmers have been selling their wool and mohair through South Africa's BKB broker until the government froze that trade practice through the mentioned regulation without first clearing out issues with the affected stakeholders including the farmers themselves (Lesotho Times, 2019).

Moreover, with the new 2018 Wool and Mohair regulations, the government of Lesotho planned to auction all wool and mohair in Lesotho to gain recognition of the origins of the product, Lesotho Times (2018). The licensing of conducting wool and mohair business included categories such as shearing sheds; brokering; testing; trading and auctioning; export and processing (Lesotho Times 2018; Wool and Mohair Regulations, 2018). According to the government, this is aimed at preventing the monopolistic nature of the business that existed for more than four decades with the country not deriving marginal benefits from the produce (Lesotho Times, 2018). It is also believed that the country was robbed of billions of Rands in unfair trading practices and pricing of wool and mohair as neither the government nor the farmers had any say in the selling of the product (Lesotho Times, 2018). Consequently, a lot of business opportunities were lost as a result including adding value to the actual product before it gets exported for sales. With a gross income of more than R350 million, Lesotho National Wool and Mohair Growers Association incurred expenses of more than R50 million in VAT, broker commission, transport, handling fee, and insurance in the 2016/17 financial year (Lesotho Times, 2018).

In his 2019/2020 Budget Speech, Lesotho's Minister of Finance indicated the government's intention to reform the wool and mohair industry by localising the brokerage service, regulating the industry, and introducing other transformative plans to enhance value to the sector (Budget Speech, 2019/2020). However, the perceived benefits from the new regulatory framework seemed to be far from what the farmers anticipated. Firstly, the farmers maintained that they were not consulted or engaged in any way in the formulation of the Wool and Mohair regulations (The Silo, 2018). Secondly, under the new regulations, the farmers were forced to store their produce for the first time in 2018 at the local Maseru-based Thaba-Bosiu Wool Centre (see Picture 6 below) for processing, auctioning, and shipping abroad (The Silo, 2018). This practice was opposed to the old one of having the old South African broker, BKB, take wool and mohair to Port Elizabeth, South Africa for processing and exportation. Thus, in practice, the government advocated for a monopolistic approach to the benefit of Chinese businessman and broker – Stone Shi who conducted auctions on behalf of the farmers (Lesotho Times, 2019). It should be noted that this is a direct opposite of what both the Minister of Finance and the regulatory framework maintained on paper. The Lesotho Minister of Small Business maintained that the new regulations were enacted to ensure that the broker was the only licensed entity to auction wool and mohair (The Silo, 2018). It is clear that Lesotho politicians, in enacting Wools Regulation 2018 attempted to monopolise sales/auctioning of wool and mohair to benefit politically connected Chinese broker.



Picture 6: Lesotho Wool Centre. **Picture Credit:** Newsday (2019).

Additionally, farmers experienced long delays in receiving payments and some of the farmers have still not received their earnings from sales to the extent that the new Chinese broker apologised to the farmers owed R165 million (Lesotho Times, 2019). This means that 70% of the population negatively affected by this delay are mostly farmers (Lesotho Times, 2019). Thus, their lives were being held at ransom as they did not gain anything from the sales of wool and mohair. Nonetheless, according to the Central Bank of Lesotho's Quarterly Review, new loans were extended to wool and mohair farmers for the agricultural sector to remain on an upward trajectory (2021:8). Several farmers and stakeholders such as Lesotho National Wool and Mohair Farmers Association that has over 40, 000 membership, contested government of Lesotho's enactment of the mentioned regulations (Nkuebe, 2020). Among the farmers' contestations was the fact that instead of the prompt, high returns on the sale of their wool and mohair produce, they experienced both reduced and delayed payments (Khotso, 2020).

The government of Lesotho bowed down to pressure and reversed the regulations in 2019 thus allowing wool and mohair farmers to sell their produce to places of their choice and preference (Government of Lesotho, 2018; Afrobarometer, 2020; Khotso, 2020).

2.5 Other Challenges facing the Wool and Mohair Industry

Notwithstanding the above challenges, there are other hardships the industry is confronted with and these include severe drought, economic depression-induced price falls in wool and mohair, degradation of land, livestock theft, goat and sheep population which fell by almost half in the past decade (New Agriculturalist, 2018). There was a decline in productivity and the proportion of households owning livestock, stock theft, degradation of pastures, and uncontrolled grazing (New Agriculturalist, 2018).

Farming of livestock in Lesotho is generally favoured by ecological conditions, large areas are covered by foothills and mountains which makes the production of livestock attainable (Mokhethi, 2015). Traditional herders led the animals to graze on communal land in the foothills as they are mostly covered with good pastures, especially for large herds. Thus, the highlands can accommodate a large number of livestock because of the massive grazing land (FAO, 2016).

It should be noted that for the majority of farmers, it has become the normal traditional practice for herd boys to live in those isolated conditions herding sheep and goats (Mokhethi, 2015). That is, taking a large herd of animals to the rangeland in the mountains. Nevertheless, soil compaction and poor animal health still affect the yield of wool and mohair in terms of both quality and quantity and the farmers do not get any subsidy, there is also little supervision on livestock improvement, and a small fraction of cash income earned from wool and mohair exports due to taxation (Mokhethi, 2015).

2.6 Theoretical Framework

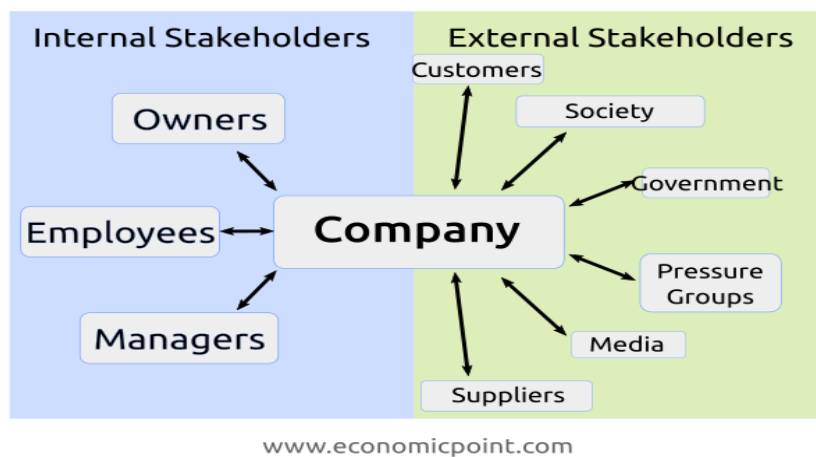
Stakeholder theory has been identified as the theoretical framework underpinning this research study and shall be discussed below.

2.6.1 Stakeholder Theory

This theory stresses the significance and interconnectedness between customers, suppliers, employees, communities, and investors who all have a stake in the organisation or company (Freeman, 1984; Freeman, Dmytriiev, & Phillips, 2021). The actors in an organisation play an

important role in ensuring that it keeps running and its state of affairs remains afloat as it works towards meeting set objectives. Stakeholder theorists give value to competitive advantage which is considered as the cornerstone in the field of strategic management (Freeman, Dmytriiev, & Phillips, 2021). The role of cooperation and shared values to enhance performance in an organisation take centre stage in stakeholder theory (Evan & Freeman, 1988; Phillips, 2003, Wicks, Gilbert, & Freeman, 1994 cited in Freeman, Dmytriiev, & Phillips, 2021). Scholars such as Steven Freeman are some of the pioneers of this theory. The picture below depicts Stakeholder Theory.

Stakeholder Theory



Source: Freeman (1984:38).

Those that have a stake in the company include both external and internal stakeholders that are very influential in the manner in which the company runs its state of affairs as depicted in the diagram above. It should be noted that Lesotho's wool and mohair industry is no exception to this theory as several stakeholders including government, media, pressure groups (wool farmers groupings), distribution brokers, employees, and society at large as a number of those living in rural areas are said to be relying on agriculture for their economic survival. While the role of government in leveling the playing ground remains important as seen in Chapter 2, it needs to be minimal as it tends to be highly politicised as argued throughout this research study.

Furthermore, stakeholder theorists rarely reference people as human resources or human capital but as stakeholders who have faces and names as highlighted in stakeholder literature (McVea & Freeman, 2005). Therefore, the use of natural, technological, and financial resources remains critical but behind these resources are people (Freeman, Dmytriiev, & Phillips, 2021).

2.7 Conclusion

Lesotho's wool and mohair industry plays a crucial role in the economy of this country. Nevertheless, the government's involvement in the industry is still controversial and a cause for debate. Despite the challenges the wool and mohair farmers are confronted with, they remain at the heart of the industry and for this reason, their role needs proper recognition and acknowledgment. Although there is a dearth of literature on the research topic, this chapter has covered the history and current debates about the wool and mohair industry. As the industry has proven to be highly politicised in recent years, there is a need for a critical conversation by all stakeholders including the government of Lesotho to deliberate on a working economic approach that will be beneficial to all producers of wool and mohair. The Research Methodology is thoroughly discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological approach employed in this research study. The study is exploratory by nature and has adopted a qualitative approach. It is through this methodological approach that empirical first-hand information on economic challenges faced by Lesotho wool and mohair farmers based in the Leribe district was collected. This chapter further elaborates in detail on this methodological approach including the ethical considerations that are fundamental to the research study.

3.1 Qualitative Research Approach

This research study has adopted a qualitative research approach to obtain first-hand evidence on economic challenges faced by wool and mohair farmers in the Leribe district of Lesotho. Primary data were collected through conducting in-depth interviews with several wool and mohair producers who were study respondents in this research. It should be noted that the intention was to interview about 30 study participants, but data saturation was reached on the 13th respondent. Thus, no new information from the study participants was emerging during the interviews. However, the key component of the qualitative research approach, which is to obtain rich in-depth information was attained. Thus, guided by a set of questions (see Appendix A: Interview Schedule attached), the researcher got a chance to sit down with the respondents and probe, which allowed him to seek clarity and further discussions on questions needing additional explanation.

Qualitative research methodology puts more emphasis on meanings, experience, and understanding as these are used to study human experience from the viewpoint of the study respondents (Brink, van der Walt, and Rensburg, 2012). It was therefore significant for the researcher to conduct in-depth interviews with the wool and mohair farmers to try and understand their experiences of the industry. This accorded the study respondents a chance to share their opinions and viewpoints on various issues in the wool and mohair subsector including

how some issues can be addressed. This is one of the main advantages of the qualitative research approach.

Moreover, the qualitative research method includes collecting and analysing non-numerical data such as audio, texts, and videos among others, to understand opinions and experiences (Bhandari, 2022). This is the opposite of quantitative design which involves collecting and analysing numerical and statistical data. The advantage of adopting a qualitative method as opposed to a quantitative approach for this research is the fact that the method of communication and sending questionnaires to study respondents was going to be a challenge as many of them live in rural areas where access to emails, internet and other communication forms remains a problem. Again, the literacy rate of farmers and their ability to clearly understand questions on their own remained doubtful to the researcher hence a choice to adopt a qualitative approach was deemed relevant and appropriate. The researcher sat down with the study respondents to gain in-depth information, and this made it easy for the researcher to clarify and explain the research and questions in the manner in which study participants understood and responded well without challenges.

It suffices to say that one of the advantages of the qualitative research method is that it happens in a natural setting and therefore can generate new ideas (Bhandari, 2022). Thus, data collection happens in the real world and the researcher can probe for clarity hence new information and ideas are generated. For this research, the study participants discussed their naturalistic experiences on issues of the wool and mohair industry as they understood them. The study respondents were asked open-ended questions which allowed them to share their insights without limiting their responses to the boundaries of the questions asked. With the quantitative approach, the study participants are asked closed-ended questions that do not grant them the opportunity to express their experiences adequately. The qualitative approach on the other hand allows the researcher to obtain as rich and in-depth information as possible. Additionally, qualitative research design aims to address questions that are concerned with understanding the meanings and experiences of human lives and the social world (Fossey, Harvey, Davidson, and Mcdermott, 2016).

However, the qualitative research design is criticised for being both unreliable and subjective. This means that since it takes place in its natural setting, it becomes difficult to control factors that may affect data, making such data unreliable (Bhandari, 2022). Furthermore, the significance of the information gathered during interpretation and analysis and whether such data are important or irrelevant remains with the researcher (Bhandari, 2022). Therefore, the interpretation of the same data may vary quite significantly.

Merriam (2002) submits that central to understanding qualitative research is the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals who naturally interact with their world. It means qualitative researchers have an interest in understanding what those interpretations are at a particular point in time and in a particular context. It is important to learn how individuals experience and interact with their social world and the meaning it has for them.

The researcher, in the qualitative research method, becomes the main instrument for collecting and analysing data. Because of a deeper understanding of the goal of the research, the researcher becomes an important human instrument that will be able to respond and adapt to collecting and analysing data (Merriam, 2002). This is one of the advantages of the qualitative research approach because the researcher can expand his or her understanding through verbal and nonverbal gestures that emerge through interactions with the research participants. Then the researcher will be able to summarise information collected from the interviews with respondents.

There are shortcomings with the researcher as the main human instrument for data collection and analysis in the qualitative research approach. This includes the biasedness of the researcher that might have an impact on the research study (Merriam, 2002). “Rather than trying to eliminate these biases or subjectivities, it is important to identify them and monitor them as to how they may be shaping the collection and interpretation of data,” (Merriam, 2002:15). The bright side of it remains the fact that the researcher becomes part of the entire stages of researcher and thus become important in understanding, shaping and interpreting data. Qualitative researchers attempt to understand a phenomenon by building observations of the social interactions in the

field. The findings of qualitative research, Merriam (2002) argues, are derived in the form of themes, categories, concepts, hypotheses, and typologies. This becomes highly descriptive as words, pictures and narrative convey a message about a social construct being studied as opposed to numbers in a quantitative research approach. The participants are more likely to describe a context and the researcher will obtain highly rich data in the form of documents, field notes, videotapes, and electronic communication that are always included in the research findings of a study for better interpretation and analysis (Merriam, 2002). The direct quotes and excerpts from transcripts do contribute to the description of the qualitative research method.

In the qualitative research approach, the main sources of data collection include interviews, and documents (Merriam 2002). The study research question informs the data collection strategy and thus methods and sources of data to get the best information to respond to the question (Merriam, 2002). At times there is more than one method of data collection to support each other adopted in the research study but one method is still appropriate and acceptable.

In this research approach there are specific questions asked by the researcher in structured interviews and such questions are determined and prepared well ahead of time (Merriam, 2002). In this type of interview, the researcher is prepared and has the questions and order ready for engagement with the study participant(s). There is structure in the manner in which the interview is conducted. On the other hand, for unstructured interviews, one topic area explores a situation but questions and the order in which they are asked in the interview are not predetermined. It means that the conversation between the researcher and the respondent flows with no structure, especially for the questions guiding the discussion. There are the interviews that fall in between the two types mentioned above called semi-structured interviews. This type of interview contains a combination of less and more structured questions and usually, there is specific information desired from study participants (Merriam, 2002). The greater part of the interview is guided by a list of questions and issues to be investigated in the study but “neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time,” (Merriam, 2002:14).

3.1.1. The Onion Ring Approach

This approach was utilised to guide the researcher in selecting the methodological approach that he deemed suitable for this research. Figure 2 below captures the essence of the onion ring in research.

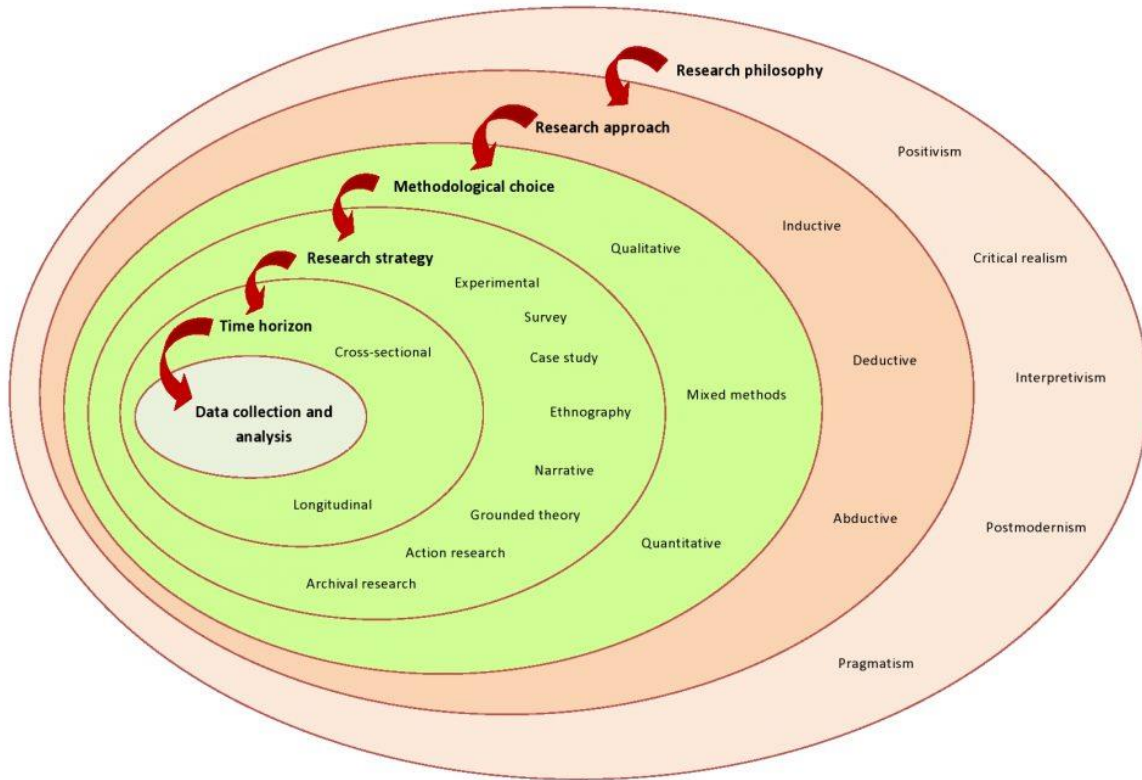


Figure 2: The Onion Ring. Source: Saunders et al (2019) (cited in Tengli, 2020)

The onion ring provides a pictographic approach to aspects of research to come up with an appropriate design for the topic under study (Saunders et al, 2019 cited in Tengli, 2020). The onion ring guides the researcher with the necessary steps to develop a research methodology (Saunders et al, 2019). It is divided into three levels which are research approach or philosophy, research design (this one includes methodological choices and strategy) and tactics which capture data collection and its analysis and interpretation (Saunders et al, 2019; Tengli, 2020). In this research study in particular, the initial step started with research questions and objectives that informed the research approach and choice of research design or methodology to be adopted.

The inner or last part of the onion ring is data collection and analysis. All the layers of the research onion are both interrelated and interdependent (Tengli, 2020).

3.2 Population

It refers to a group of people or objects that the researcher is interested in studying and meets the criterion set out by the researcher (Brink et al, 2012). The number of elements through which the researcher makes conclusions and generalisations is referred to as the target population (De Vos, 2005). For this research, the study population or target population is comprised of Lesotho wool and mohair growers or farmers. There are over 40, 000 wool and mohair farmers that annually shear their 1.25 million sheep and 845, 000 goats and have their fleece marketed on the international market (Lesotho Budget Speech, 2019/2020; Mokhethi *et al.*, 2016).

Nonetheless, because the researcher did not have access to the entire population because of the study focus area, he considered the accessible population as a target for the study. Sometimes entry into such a population may not be granted by the relevant authority, making it difficult or impossible to access it, the researcher then has to limit his or her scope of the population to a defined area (Brink et al, 2012). The researcher must define and describe the population to be studied and more importantly stipulate criteria for inclusion (Brink et al, 2012). These criteria are stated as ‘eligibility criteria’, ‘inclusion criteria’, or distinguishing descriptors (Polit & Beck, 2008:338 cited in Brink et al, 2012). The researcher in this study used this criterion to determine whether or not to classify the growers of wool and mohair as the members of the target population to be studied.

Additionally, the researcher may exclude certain elements (individuals or objects) from the target population following certain criteria referred to as ‘exclusion criteria’, or ‘delimitation’ (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2010:222 cited in Brink et al, 2012). The sampling method discussed below was used to draw a sample of wool and mohair farmers in the Leribe district.

3.3 Sampling Method

A sample is a subset or fraction of the whole set or population under study that is selected by the researcher to participate in a research study (Brink et al, 2012). This is a selected group of persons or objects with elements of the defined population to be studied in research. In this study, the population is wool and mohair growers in Lesotho and the sample becomes growers from Leribe district in Lesotho.

Sampling is defined as a process where the researcher selects a sample from the population to obtain data and “information regarding a phenomenon in a way that represents the population of interest,” Brink et al, 2012:132). The researcher follows a stipulated technique of sampling to select a subset of the defined or target population to be studied. It is also noted that this technique should follow certain principles and the choice of it has to be guided by the research approach adopted. In qualitative research, only a sample of the entire population is selected for any given study (Mack, Woodson, Macqueen, Grey, & Emily, 2005). In line with the research objectives and features of the study population, it is important to determine the number of study participants to be selected and the criteria used for selection.

Furthermore, there are two sampling methods in research – probability or random sampling and non-probability sampling (Brink et al, 2012). Both sampling approaches will be discussed briefly, and the next section will cover a sampling method adopted in this research study.

Probability Sampling is a sampling method that is more likely to be representative of the population as it also reflects its variations (Brink, et al, 2012). It means that all the features and elements of the population have an equal chance of being selected for the sample under study (Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Brink et al, 2012). Here the researcher is allowed to estimate the sampling error and the advantage is that it reduces biasedness in the sample as it makes it possible for the researcher to correctly use inferential statistics (Brink et al, 2012). A generalisation of the research findings becomes a key advantage in this sampling method as the researcher’s concern is to select a sample that has findings that will be representative of the target population (Brink et al, 2012). Therefore, the researcher has to know every element,

feature, and characteristic of the population to randomly select the sample from a list of the population. The common techniques of probability sampling include simple random sampling, systematic random sampling, stratified random sampling, and cluster sampling (Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Brink et al, 2012). For purposes of this research, the mentioned common techniques of probability sampling shall not be discussed as this research has adopted none of those techniques.

On the other hand, the non-probability sampling method is a sampling technique that may not necessarily and accurately represent the target population (Brink et al, 2012). This approach allows the researcher to judge and select the sample participants in the study who are knowledgeable about the social condition or phenomenon under study (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Here, access to the participants or their features is very limited, and the representativeness of the population cannot be determined as the researcher cannot specify whether each element of the population has an equal chance of being selected and included in the sample (Brink et al, 2012). The representativeness of the target population in this sampling method is compromised. This method is however praised for being economical, and convenient and gives the population that is not amenable to probability sampling and when the researcher is unable to locate the entire population (Brink et al, 2012). The researcher uses their objective judgement as a starting point to select the sample and own decisions as the study continues (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). The major non-probability sampling techniques are convenience sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling, and special technique sampling or snowball or network sampling (Brink et al, 2010).

The main disadvantage of the non-probability sampling method is that it does not contribute to generalisation as most of the judgement in selecting the sample to participate in the research study depends on the researcher's decision. Therefore, biasedness can be present (Brink et al, 2012). However, this is defensible. The data collected from non-probability samples has the potential to be of high quality when the researcher is working with participants who are willing to take part in the study (Brink et al, 2012). This is important because the study respondents are in the position to offer rich information that is important for findings and analysis. Non-random

methods are used in selecting sampling elements in the non-probability sampling technique. For this study, therefore, the Purposive sampling technique has been adopted. This non-probability method is discussed in detail in the section below.

3.4 Purposive Sampling Method

A sampling technique applied to this research study was the judgemental sampling method also known as purposive sampling. The purposive sampling technique provides the researcher with a wide range of non-probability sampling methods to draw from. For instance, a phenomenon may be investigated using critical case sampling which is done before an expert sampling approach can be adopted (Sharma, 2017). The disadvantages of the Purposive sampling method include the fact that it is highly prone to the researcher's bias as it is created on the researcher's judgement which may not always be a good one (Sharma, 2017). But this is acceptable, especially in instances where the judgements are not based on criteria that are necessarily clear or ill-conceived. That being the case, the expert or researcher's judgement becomes an acceptable criterion. However, it may be difficult to defend the representativeness of the sample in purposive sampling where a unit selection of study participants is subjectively based on the researcher's judgement (Sharma, 2017).

The purposive sampling method is common in the qualitative approach and often the researcher does not know in advance how many study participants are needed for the study (Brink et al, 2012). In this research, the researcher interviewed thirteen (13) wool and mohair farmers until a point where no new data emerged from the interviews. The researcher had reached a point of data saturation (Brink et al, 2012). The advantage of using purposive sampling is that it allows the researcher to select the sample based on prior knowledge of the situation to be studied (Brink et al, 2012). However, this sampling technique is criticised for the limited generalisability of its results, the potential of the sample to be biased, and not necessarily representing the defined population.

This technique was employed to select study participants until data reached saturation point. Primary data were collected through conducting in-depth interviews with wool and mohair

farmers who were study respondents. In this sampling method, the researcher uses their judgement to select units of study such as people, organisations, institutions, and pieces of data (Sharma, 2017). This sampling technique provides the researchers with justifications to make generalisations from the sample under study (Sharma, 2017). In most cases, this type of generalisation may be theoretical, logical, and analytical.

Although criticised for lack of generalisability and representatively, the purposive sampling method adopted in the participant selection process allowed the researcher to select the sample based on the prior knowledge of the phenomenon that was to be studied. It allowed the researcher to go straight to the study participants he deemed relevant and knowledgeable about the topic. The Leribe district coordinator also guided the researcher to the respondents who were well-informed about the dynamics and issues on the ground.

3.4 Interviewing Process

The qualitative research approach allows for the use of semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation (Mack *et al*, 2005). The question format is open-ended and allows the participants to share their views and background on the research questions. The study respondents had an opportunity to share and describe their individual experiences and opinions in a guided discussion about wool and mohair issues in Lesotho. Consequently, coming up with an interview schedule became crucial as it guided and structured the discussion through questions. The researcher had an opportunity to engage with the respondents and probe them to obtain as much rich information as possible. This approach allows for flexibility as the researcher may add questions or words to a particular interview question and it makes the “study design interactive; that is, data collection and research questions are adjusted according to what is learned,” (Mack *et al*, 2005:3).

Moreover, the data collection process is very important in research and has to be done in compliance with several ethical considerations which are discussed later in this chapter. It should be noted that ethics in data collection were taken into consideration when conducting this

research study as it guided the researcher's conduct and the process to ensure the protection of the study participants.

Upon making an application for ethical clearance approval with the UKZN Ethics Committee, the researcher contacted the Lesotho National Wool and Mohair Growers Association (LWMGA) office to explain the purpose and scope of the study. The researcher emphasised the need for and importance of engaging farmers as study participants in this research through interviews with the researcher.

The researcher was guided by the Lesotho National Wool and Mohair Growers Association (LNWMGA) and permission was granted by the Office Manager after the association Chairperson was briefed about the study. The Chairperson then contacted the Leribe District Committee Chairperson to brief him about the researcher and his study. Then the national Chairperson provided the researcher with contact details of the Leribe District Chairperson. The LNWMGA Office Manager briefly provided information on the dynamics of the Leribe district concerning geography and the potential participants the researcher may be interested in interviewing. She offered support throughout the data collection process as and when needed.

The researcher then contacted the Leribe chairperson, who is also a wool and mohair farmer in the Leribe district, to set up an appointment at his home in a village by Pitseng, Leribe which is about 140km outside Maseru district (the capital of Lesotho). The researcher first built rapport with the District Chairperson and then had the interview after explaining the purpose of the study and ethical considerations thereof. The interview went well as the researcher was following a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix A: Interview Schedule attached). The district chairperson then discussed the dynamics insofar as wool and mohair farmers are concerned. The researcher re-emphasised the confidentiality and anonymity of the study. The District Chairperson shared contact details of twenty-six (26) farmers in the district. Based on their geographic reach, contactable, willingness to participate in the study, and information gathered from the district chairperson, the researcher selected eighteen (18) participants, contacted them and set up an appointment to meet them at a venue of their choice but also reachable by the

researcher. Three (3) of participants gave apologies on the day of the interview citing different reasons and other commitments for not being able to participate in the study. After conducting thirteen (13) interviews with the study participants, the researcher felt that the study data collection had reached saturation as there was no new information emerging from the interviews. At the time when the researcher had to contact the last two (2) respondents to explain to them that the researcher was pressed for time to take their interviews, they were both not reachable as their mobile contacts were not available.

The researcher used his mobile cellphone to contact study participants on their cellphone contact details provided by the Leribe district chairperson. It is worth noting that the researcher followed the same introductions, rapport building, and explanations of the purpose of the study together with ethical considerations at each of the 13 interviews conducted. While explaining to the study participants that the researcher had already been given authority from the national farmer-membership office to conduct the study, it was enough for the participants to understand that it was indeed an authentic, approved research process. The Gatekeepers Letter was obtained from the LNWMGA national office – which is a wool and mohair farmers' membership body in Lesotho. The purpose of the letter was authority to conduct research among association members as study participants. One of the limitations in sample selection was that the researcher only had contact details of those farmers who are members of LNWMGA. Some private farmers are not members of LNWMGA that did not take part in this study and their experiences and views are not included in this study.

Each of the interviews took place at a convenient time and place for the respondents. It should also be highlighted that for the respondents to open up about the topic, the researcher first built rapport with the wool and mohair respondents individually before the interviews. The researcher had with him the research tools such as a Dictaphone, notebook, pen, and interview schedule during face-to-face interviews with the study participants. He also obtained permission to use Dictaphone to record the interviews from the respondents and none seemed uncomfortable with it.

The researcher introduced himself to the study participants before the interviews, highlighting the main ethical considerations in this research. The researcher explained the informed consent thoroughly to the study participants individually and invited each to sign their form before the interview commenced. During the interviews, the researcher maintained a high level of professionalism as he refrained from showing any signs of disrespect, disbelief, or superiority. Although the study was by nature, not deeply personal to the study participants, no harm was anticipated. The researcher was always cautious not to expose participants to any form of emotional or physical harm by asking questions regarded as culturally, politically, religiously inappropriate, or otherwise. The researcher strictly followed the interview schedule and probed quite carefully. At the end of each interview, the researcher thanked the study participants for their time. Overall, the actual interviews with study participants went smoothly without any interruptions as the researcher was equipped with sufficient research tools and training to conduct the study.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves the process of organising, systematically searching, arranging transcripts, and interpreting qualitative data to capture the themes and patterns that emerge during the data collection process of research (Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Wong, 2008). Thus, it is the process of bringing meaning, categorising data, understanding, and interacting with the data collected. It is about making sense of the huge amounts of data collected by reducing raw information into a logical chain of evidence by drawing meaning from data (Wong, 2008). It involves pursuing the relationship between themes of data to increase understanding of the situation and categories (Hilal and Alabri, 2013). This requires the researcher to be flexible and engage with the data that has been collected. Qualitative research, unlike the quantitative approach that uses statistical methods, explores values, thoughts, and experiences of a phenomenon that is under investigation (Wong, 2008). In this research study, data was collected, interpreted, and grouped into themes as discussed in this section. The logical process of data analysis adopted in this research was also discussed in this section. Patton (2002) maintains that data analysis is the process of reducing and synthesising volumes of raw data to develop a structure on the significance of the research discovery. The first step in processing primary data in this research study was to listen to

interviews audios and then make notes. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to engage with first-hand raw data by recording important themes that emerged from the interviews. This was also done to get a general sense of the interviews (De Vos, 2002).

Furthermore, the researcher adopted Tech's (1990:154-156 cited in De Vos, 2002) approach to data analysis which includes the steps as laid out below:

Step 1: The researcher read all the transcripts to get a sense of the general findings. In this, the researcher wrote the notes of ideas as they came to mind;

Step 2: The researcher then selected one interview that he regarded as the most interesting and pondered the meanings of data from the study participants in line with the research objectives. The researcher wrote such thoughts in the margins;

Step 3: The researcher read and studied the transcriptions to identify the themes that emerged during the interviews and noted them down;

Step 4: The researcher took the list and went back to the data. He used the themes for making an analysis;

Step 5: The researcher looked for descriptive wording for the topics that were related to each other and then repeated Step 3 above to put themes, categories, and sub-categories by looking at their interrelationships (between categories);

Step 6: A final decision was taken by the researcher on the themes, categories, and sub-categories that came up during the interviews;

Step 7: The researcher then puts data into themes, categories, and sub-categories to perform preliminary analysis; and

Step 8: Lastly, the researcher compared the themes with transcripts to double-check if any data had been left out. An analytical discussion was provided by the researcher to illustrate the interpretation of data from primary sources.

The fact that the researcher was fully involved and engaged in every step of this research study and had a thorough understanding of the research put him in a better position to argue on the findings when analysing and interpreting data. The researcher was able to provide analytical discussions as will be seen in the next chapter on data analysis. Moreover, to keep the study respondents' identity anonymous and confidential, the researcher assigned and used codes WM01, WM02...to WM13. WM stands for wool and mohair and WM01 stands for the first respondent that took part in the research study and WM02 stands for the second respondent ...and WM13 stands for the last respondent interviewed. So, the chapter on the Results and Data Analysis will refer to 'WM' as the study participants illustrated in this paragraph.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research is one of the most fundamental issues. Research ethics deals with the interaction between the researcher and the study participants, and it stems from the history of mistakes and abuses made in the course of biomedical research (Mack *et al*, 2005). It should be noted that the proposal for this research study had to go through the UKZN Research Ethics Committee which ensured that it complied with the required ethical considerations in research. Application for ethical clearance was done in compliance with ethical guidelines at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership at UKZN's College of Law and Management Sciences. Because the application was launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, communication with the UKZN Ethics Office was disrupted and delayed. Out of desperation, the researcher collected data without full ethical clearance approval from the UKZN Ethics Office and thereby issued with ethics warning.

This section discusses the ethical considerations that are important to this research study. Although this research study is not harmful by nature, it had to comply with fundamental ethical

considerations. This was done to ensure that the study participants were protected and not exposed as any information provided could be traced back to them.

3.6.1 Informed Consent

It is important for study participants to understand what it means to participate in any given research study. Therefore, informed consent provides them with an opportunity to decide consciously and deliberately whether to take part in the study or not. This ensures respect for study participants. The foundation of trust that has been created between the researcher and study participant is crucial and should thus be maintained. The ethical principles of voluntary participation and protecting participants from harm are contained and formalised in the concept of informed consent (Brink et al, 2012). The researcher noted that informed consent elements include the type of information needed from the study participant; the degree of understanding the participant must have to give consent and lastly the fact that the participant had a choice of whether to give consent (Brink et al, 2012). In this case, the researcher discussed the proposed research project with the wool and mohair farmers who participated in this study to ensure that they understood the study even before they individually decided to participate in the research. Such study participants were asked to fill in an Informed Consent form (See Appendix B: Informed Consent form attached).

3.6.2 Voluntary Participation

The aspect of participating voluntarily in the research study is a significant one. The study participants in this research were informed from the onset that their participation in the research was voluntary as no incentives were issued for their participation. As such, they may withdraw from the study at any time during the interviews should they find it necessary to do so. Thus, this study is not coercive and that refusal to participate will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits (Brink et al, 2012).

3.6.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality

The twin concepts of anonymity and confidentiality are very significant in research. This involves the researcher having responsibility to keep study participants' identities secret and

anonymous (Brink et al, 2012). Thus, information collected from the study respondents had to be kept as confidential as possible and the researcher should not be able to link participants to their data (Brink et al, 2012).

In this study, the study participants' names do not appear in the research report. The researcher ensured that no names or links to names and data collected appear in this research report. This implies that the identity of the study participants was protected in that respect. The use of names especially of the respondents was avoided during both the interviews and reporting of the research results. In an event where the participant's right to anonymity is violated, the researcher is liable to clarify the situation to the study respondents.

The mechanisms to ensure confidentiality that the researcher adopted include assigning a code or number to each study participant including when such data were being reported. The researcher ensured that the list of participants' names matched the code assigned to the individual respondent. The researcher also made sure that such a list of real names was destroyed at the end of the research study. Moreover, data collected in the form of audio, records, transcriptions, and notes were kept safely and securely. The researcher is aware that allowing unauthorised persons to gain access to the study data constitutes a breach of confidentiality and as such was avoided at all costs.

3.6.4 Ethics in Data Capturing and Reporting

The researcher has an obligation to the study participants to write up honest and accurate information and results of the research conducted (Brink et al, 2012). Therefore, the researcher in this study had to ensure that data was not manipulated, and any information should not be stolen and presented as the author's. Emphasis on honest analysis and reporting of the research findings was taken into high regard in this research study. The researcher attempted to interpret the research findings without any personal, emotional, religious, or political bias (Brink et al, 2012).

For this research, consent was obtained from the study participants to allow for the capturing of data through the use of a Dictaphone during the interviews as indicated earlier in this chapter. No

names of participants were used to ensure that their identities remained confidential and anonymous. The use of a recording device enabled the researcher to obtain rich information from the participants and it was captured verbatim. This is important for the processing and interpretation of data.

Further, the researcher protected both soft and hard evidence and findings from the interviews, although this topic is not regarded as sensitive by nature. Audios and raw data from the interviews were stored using WinZip and password-protected in a researcher's laptop computer. The researcher was the only person who had access to such raw information. Once data has been processed and the research report produced, all raw data was destroyed and deleted from the storage.

3.6.5 Validity and Reliability

Validity and Reliability are both important in qualitative research as well. Researchers are concerned with the quality of their data collection techniques (Brink *et al*, 2012). The central question that determines the concept of validity and reliability addresses the issue of whether the measures used by the researcher yield data that reflect the truth. Qualitative research methods suggest strategies that the researcher can employ in data collection to reflect the truthfulness or validity of the research results. In this research study, the researcher followed research steps by using an interview schedule as a tool to guide the discussion with the wool and mohair respondents.

Furthermore, reliability is part of validity in that a research instrument that does not yield reliable results cannot be considered valid (Brink *et al*, 2012). The drawback in this regard is that an instrument can be used to collect data that is reliable, but it may not necessarily mean that the data collected are of valid measure (Brink *et al*, 2012).

The measures and applications to test the validity of the research cannot be used in the qualitative research approach as compared to the quantitative method. There is debate in research

on whether terms such as validity, reliability, and generalisability are appropriate to evaluate and assess qualitative research (Brink et al, 2012). Therefore, the issue of 'trustworthiness' of the findings which is incorporated in the methodology section of this study becomes very important. The researcher accounts for personal biasedness which may influence the findings. Biases in sampling and critical reflection of methods ensure enough depth and relevance of data collection and its analysis in this study.

Further, the fact that a Dictaphone was used to capture the interviews with respondents verbatim, provides for rich descriptions of participants' accounts to support research findings in this study. This is one aspect that enhances the validity and reliability of the data collected. Data was recorded with a high degree which demonstrated clear interpretations and consistency. This further demonstrates research clarity of thought process during data processing, analysis and interpretation and thus reduces research bias.

The methods of establishing both reliability and validity in the qualitative research method cannot be judged on the same magnitude as that of the quantitative method (Brink et al, 2012). Actually, qualitative researchers prefer to use terms such as 'consistency', 'credibility', 'transferability', 'conformability', 'dependability', and 'trustworthiness' as opposed to 'reliability' and 'validity' (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Leininger, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; all cited in Brink et al, 2012:196). In the qualitative research approach, credibility is a measure of the truth or accuracy of the study findings and the dependability of data demonstrates assurances despite the changes that may have occurred during data collection, the research findings were established (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Leininger, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; all cited in Brink et al, 2012). Transferability means the extent to which the research findings can both be generalised or transferred to other contexts or research settings (Brink et al, 2012).

This research attempted to meet the above-mentioned standards, but it should be mentioned that this qualitative study involved the views of participants (that may change from time to time) on the one end and the conduct of the researcher (who was professionally trained in carrying out

research) on the other end. Concepts of reliability and validity are increasingly significant in qualitative approaches as they are in quantitative research (Anderson, 2010). This examines both the reliability and validity and objectivity and credibility of the research. That means that honesty and genuineness of the data collected relate to reproducibility and stability of the data (Anderson, 2010).

Qualitative research findings are often criticised for lack of rigour which is the openness, relevance and methodological congruence, thoroughness in data collection, processing, interpretation, and data analysis as it relies on the researcher's self-understanding (Brink et al, 2012). This involves the researcher's interactive approach between their personal history, social class, ethnicity, and those of the study participants (Brink et al, 2012). This is important because the researcher has been considerate and let go of some of the pre-conceived ideas and judgements about the study setting and that of the participants and has been as open-minded as possible to the research. Therefore, as guided by the principles of qualitative research methodology, the researcher in this study approached data collection and analysis with so much rigour and participated openly with the study respondents. This is fundamental if consistency, stability, and repeatability of the respondents' accounts were to be reached (Brink et al, 2012).

In order to enhance the credibility of the data, the researcher stayed in the field longer with the study participants to ensure that context-rich information was collected. This is related to internal validity in the qualitative research approach to enhance the authenticity of the findings (Brink et al, 2012).

3.6.6 No harm to participants.

This research study is not harmful by nature as it involves obtaining participants' views and background information on challenges in the wool and mohair industry. Appropriate ethical considerations were applied to ensure the protection of the respondents' dignity. The researcher followed the required research principles to guarantee that the respondents were not exposed to any form of harm that could result from this study. The researcher is well trained and equipped

with research tools and thus following ethics in this research study was not a difficult matter as discussed in this chapter.

3.7 Conclusion

This research study has adopted a qualitative research approach and this chapter has discussed the significance of that approach to this study. Ethical considerations have also been discussed in more detail as the study participants need to understand that participation in this study is voluntary. In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings in a qualitative approach, the researcher employed strategies as discussed earlier in this chapter to enhance the trustworthiness of the research findings. Although this study was not personal by nature, the respondents' accounts and information were held with a high degree of confidentiality and anonymity.

The next chapter discusses research findings and data analysis. In order to process and analyse data derived from conducting this study, themes that emerged were recorded.

CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses research findings and data analysis of data that were collected. The sample through which data were collected will be profiled to get a better understanding of the study participants' background. Firstly, this chapter will group and categorise themes that emerged during the interviews then other results will be covered in much more detail and analysed. Direct quotes from the transcripts will be written in data interpretation supported by relevant existing literature and data discussion will be displayed and discussed in detail in this chapter.

4.1 Themes

The section below uses a table to provide an overview of category, themes and sub-themes that emerged out of the interviews with study participants.

Table 1: Themes

Category	Theme	Sub-Theme
1. Sample Profile	1.1 Years of Involvement	1.1.1 Since 1980s; 1.1.2 Since 1990s; 1.1.3 Since 2000s; 1.1.4 Since 2010s;
	1.2 How & Why sheep and goats farming	1.2.1 Family legacy/inheritance; 1.2.2 Started it as a survival project; 1.2.3 Wanted to generate wealth.
	1.3 Specialise in which sale product	1.3.1 Wool and Mohair; 1.3.2 Wool only; 1.3.3 Wool and meat; 1.3.4 Wool and ewes, 1.3.5 Wool and wether; 1.3.6 Mohair and goats.

2. Production	2.1 Size of flock	2.1.1 <100; 2.1.2 >100; 2.1.3 >200; 2.1.4 >300; 2.1.5 >400
	2.2 Production Sales range in good season	2.2.1 R10, 000 – R20, 000 2.2.2 R20, 001 – R40, 000; 2.2.3 R40, 001 – R60, 000; 2.2.4 R60, 001 – R100, 000. 2.2.5 R100, 001 – R150, 000
	2.3 Uses of Monies from the sale of wool and mohair	2.3.1 Re-invest in the business; 2.3.1 Corporate social responsibility programme (supporting primary school kids with uniforms). 2.3.1 Save it at the bank for my retirement;

Category	Theme	Sub-Theme
3. Main Expenditures	3.1 Expenditures Items after sales of produce	3.1.1 Vaccines and Medications for flock 3.1.2 Supplementary feeds and ploughing pastures for the flock; 3.1.3 Children's school fees and household expenses; 3.1.4 Giving back to the community (CSI); 3.1.5 Human Resources & Welfare (Herd-boys, Animal Scientists).
4. Payments of sales of wool and mohair.	4.1 Delayed Payments from broker.	4.1.2 Two to three months waiting period; 4.1.2 Six months; 4.1.3 Never received payment for the 2017/18 season.
	4.2 Reasons for delays or non-payments.	4.2.1 Market delays; 4.2.2 No reasons given; 4.2.3 Broker waiting on payment from buyers at international auction.
	4.3 Method of Payment	4.3.1 Cheque (with individual explanatory memorandum per kg sold).

5. Distribution and Storage	5.1 Wool and Mohair Storage	5.2.1 Stored at the shearing site in bales.
	5.2 Wool and Mohair distribution	5.2.2 Transported to BKB's Port Elizabeth
6. 2018 Change of regulations	6.1 Brokering	6.1.1 New broker (Chinese-run Lesotho Wool Centre); 6.1.2 No more BKB (old broker); 6.1.3 Government controlling sale of wool and mohair (forcing farmers); 6.1.4 Small brokering companies.
	6.2 Pressure	6.2.1 Government bowed to pressure and reversed 2018 regulation; 6.2.2 The government should support farmers and not demotivate them.
7. Role of government	7.1 Role of Government	7.1.1 Has been destructive; 7.1.2 Politicians had their agendas; 7.1.3 Government wanted to collapse the sector
	7.2 Envisaged Role of Government	7.2.1 Had to support and not dictate; 7.2.2 To provide subsidies to farmers,

4.2 Respondents' profile

The study participants were asked to briefly narrate their historical background of involvement in wool and mohair production in an attempt to profile their background. The section below profiles such useful background.

Table 2. Farmer's initial year of farming and number of current flock

Year of Involvement in Sheep and Goat Farming & Current Flock							
Respondent	Year	No. of Sheep	No. of Goats	Respondent	Year	No. of Sheep	No. of Goats
WM01	1999	319	110	WM08	2000	482	125
WM02	2012	85	12	WM09	2002	231	76
WM03	2005	143	56	WM10	2016	178	46
WM04	2000	90	13	WM11	2001	220	88
WM05	2007	124	52	WM12	2000	322	75
WM06	2010	320	91	WM13	2011	201	19
WM07	2009	265	15				

From Table 2 above, only one of the respondents reported having started sheep and goat farming in the 1990s while the rest of the respondents indicated to have started their farming in the 2000s and 2010s.

WM01 said:

“After my father died in 1998, I saw that I had to look after our family sheep and goats as the firstborn at home. We survived on sale of sheep at home to cover daily household expenses. I started my flock in 1999 with 25 sheep and 40 goats. Now I have 319 sheep and 110 goats.”

WM09 said:

“I started my own Merino breed in 2002 because I saw it as the only way to get wealthy as there are no jobs in our country. I have 231 sheep and 76 goats in total.”

WM10 said:

“I specialise in selling ewes (female sheep), wether (castrated ram) and wool. It keeps me and my family going. I currently have 178 sheep and 46 goats.”

On the same token, agriculture is important as it has the potential to reduce poverty both in rural and urban areas as has been the case in Indonesia where poverty was alleviated by 50% in rural areas and 36% in urban areas (Machethe 2004; Khotso, 2020). Rural households participating in agriculture are good for the rural economy and subsistence and thus improve the living standards of those living in such areas.

On the question of what their area of interest in wool and mohair farming was, participants' responses varied from sales of wool and/or mohair to selling the actual sheep to butcher as highlighted in Table 1 above.

WM06 said:

“I mainly keep my flock at around 400, I sell old ones when there is excess to butcheries. I sell wool and sheep.”

WM08 said:

“I sell Merino wool from sheep but have seen that there is demand for mohair.”

In support of the above responses, a survey conducted by AfroBarometer in 2020 documented the views of Basotho who maintained that sales from their wool and high-quality mohair was one of their main sources of income hence raising sheep and goats was eminent for their survival (AfroBarometer, 2020).

On the question of the size of their flock, the respondents with the highest flock of sheep and goats had 480 and 125 respectively. It was observed how accurate the respondents were in giving out the exact number.

WM08 said:

“I have 482 sheep and 125 goats at the grazing post.”

The respondents with the lowest flock were respondent WM10 who started in 2016 as he mentioned that he had 78 sheep. Picture 9 below shows a caption of a typical grazing post (known as *motebo* in the local Sesotho language). There is a small hut and kraal based at the tip of the mountainous highland where most wool and mohair farmers keep their flock with herdboys to look after them. This practice of *motebo* has been going on for many years as the quality of grass in the highlands is good for grazing.



Picture 9: Grazing post. **Picture Credit:** Phoka Thene (2022)

On the amount received from the sale of wool and/or mohair, respondents provided ranging responses with the lowest indicating that he received about R12, 000 as a once-off amount for sales of their produce (in that particular year) and the highest amount was R156, 000 (in 2004) for sales that year. The respondent who indicated he had the largest flock of 482 sheep was the largest recipient of a cheque from the sale of wool.

On the question of what they use their monies from the sale of wool and mohair, study participants indicated that they use it differently with some maintaining that they use it for saving for retirement, and only one respondent said that he uses it for supporting pupils from poor background with uniforms through his social responsibility programme.

4.3 Main Expenditure Items

The researcher noted that of the 13 study respondents, only one (1) respondent was quite exact on the actual figures for the main expenditure item. This was equivalent to 7.6% of the total

respondents. The rest of the respondents provided estimates on what the main expenditure items were for their wool and mohair business as they could not remember other expenditure items off their heads.

WM03 said,

“I spend R9, 600 per month on human resource and their welfare costs; R12,000 on ram pellets in 2020 because of snow; between R15,000 – R18, 000 a year on animal medication because it was a dry season in 2018.”

Moreover, other responses on main expenditure items for their wool and mohair business, the responses included covering household expenses, paying school fees for children, ploughing pastures for their flock, and giving back to the community. It should be noted that on the human resource aspect, only one respondent indicated that he has also covered the consultancy fees of two qualified private Animal Scientists who offer medical advice for his flock. The same respondent (WM07) said:

“I also pay fees for 2 qualified private Animal Scientists whom I consult from time to time for my 265 sheep...it helps to get my flock in good physical shape for quality wool and meat production.”

The rest of the participants indicated that they receive veterinary advice from shops that sell animal medications for diseases affecting their flock and necessary vaccines.

4.4 Storage, Transportation, and Sale of Lesotho’s Wool and Mohair

The process of selling wool and mohair is at the heart of the business for the respondents as all of them indicated that they are farming modified Merino sheep and Angora goats that produce high-quality wool and mohair for sale in the international market.

According to the respondents, to avoid congestion at the shearing sheds, each farmer is allocated a day to three depending on the size of their flock in the shearing season between August to

January to shear their flock. Starting with those whose sheep produce poor quality wool to the best quality.

After their sheep and/or goats are sheared, wool and mohair are stored at the shed is put in bales (which weigh about 178kg – 185kg each bale) (see Pictures 10, 11, and 12 below) and put together with other farmers' produce. Then, once there are enough bales to fill the truck at a shed, the produce gets transported to the district storage 'warehouse' at Hlotse¹ in Leribe district. Then once there are over 180 bales to fill a horse truck (see Picture 13 below), they hire such a truck to transport their produce to Port Elizabeth to be auctioned by BKB.



Picture 10: Wool put into bales according to class at Mateka Shearing Shed, Lesotho. **Picture Credit:** Mateka Wool Project (2021)

¹ A small town in the Leribe district of Lesotho.



Picture 13: Bales of wool loaded onto a truck in transit to Port Elizabeth. Picture **Credit:** Mateka Wool Project (2021)

Maqalika (2020) wool and mohair that is sheared from sheep and goats get baled at shearing sheds and transported to the Livestock Products Marketing Systems (LPMS) for storage before it gets shipped to the broker. There are about one hundred and fifty-eight (158) recorded shearing sheds in Lesotho and 78% are government owned while the rest are privately owned by LNWMGA and entities (Alotsi, 2017; Maqalika, 2022). Therefore, wool and mohair are shipped in its greasy and unprocessed state which makes it difficult to trace the end users (Maqalika, 2022). Nkuebe (2020) submits that for over four decades, Basotho farmers have sent their wool and mohair produce to both Port Elizabeth and Durban for marketing and auction by South African brokerage company - BKB.

4.5 Payments

All the respondents indicated that upon leaving their wool and mohair at the shearing shed, they have a record of the class or grade, type of wool, and quantity documented in a triplicate and each farmer keeps their copy. This is helpful as payment of sales depends on the mentioned features of wool and mohair. The common response when asked about payments of sale for wool

and mohair, the study participants shared the same sentiments that one of the challenges has been receiving payments later than anticipated. Below are their responses.

WM05 said:

“I received payment very late...after 4 months from the time of wool was transported to PE. We were told by our national association to be patient. I struggled to pay school fees for my children as I live from that money.”

WM09 said:

“The wait [for our monies] was too long. Over 3 months. No explanation. I struggled to maintain my flock. Medication is expensive if you do not have another source of income.”

WM2 said:

“Because I know payment is not guaranteed in time, I have another stream of income. I buy and sell maize to keep me afloat.”

As the respondents indicated, delays in payments from the broker affect respondents' lifestyle. According to Maqalika (2020), delayed payments from wool and mohair broker hurt the livelihoods of sheep and goat farmers as it becomes difficult to buy medicines and vaccines for their flock, not easy to pay school fees for their children, unable to buy groceries at home and many of household activities that require income. Center for Investigative Journalism (2019:6) reports that one of the unhappy wool and mohair farmers said, “I am a father to two girls who are in high school here in Maseru and I have to cough up M2,600 per child in fees per year. But I cannot raise that money due to the delayed payments from the sale of the wool.”

4.6 The 2018 change of regulations

The farmers shared their frustration with their 2017/2018 experience in shipping their wool and mohair to the new government-advocated Lesotho Wool Centre that aimed at localising the whole sales process. Seven (7) of the thirteen (13) respondents indicated having received below half of the payments they expected. The other five (5) respondents said that they have since not

received any form of payment for the wool and mohair that they transported to Lesotho Wool Centre in 2018.

WM01 said:

“I only received about R3, 500 from that Chinese-run Wool Centre I was expecting over R11, 000. We were told that the other money would come. We have been waiting for almost 4 years now.”

WM06 said:

“We were ripped off by our government. They forced us to take our wool there at Thaba-Bosiu [Lesotho Wool Centre] in 2018 and I did not receive a cent. The government has been saying that they are sorting that out till today. I have given up.”

The wool and mohair localisation initiative by the government of Lesotho was not well-planned and implemented as the government forced the farmers to distribute, store and get their produce auctioned at the local center in the year 2017/2018. The government of Lesotho in 2018 enacted regulations that banned the export of locally produced wool and mohair if the products were not prepared, brokered, traded, and auctioned in the country (Afrobarometer, 2020; Maqalika, 2020). Lesotho Wool Centre, run by a Chinese national was given a monopoly to auction farmers' wool and mohair as farmers were made to believe that the South African-based broker BKB was robbing them. The Government of Lesotho promised farmers that they would get high returns for their products (Afrobarometer, 2020). However, that was not the case as many farmers experienced delayed, reduced, and no payment at all from the local brokering company or government (Afrobarometer, 2020). This attracted a lot of criticism from different stakeholders including the 40, 000 farmers. The government later bowed to pressure and reversed the regulations to allow farmers to sell their products through channels of their choice (Afrobarometer, 2020; Emecheta, 2020).

Moreover, the situation of little to no payment at all for their wool and mohair negatively affected the farmers, especially those who lived on that revenue. Centre for Investigative

Journalism (2019) reported that thousands of families that depend on wool and mohair proceeds were said to be in such a terrible situation that they needed food aid as a result of a Lesotho government policy to localise the sale of wool and mohair. On the other hand, the Government's Ministry of Agriculture maintained through a press conference in 2021 to have started paying farmers.

Further, the changes in the legal framework regulating have attempted to cut down the supply chain of the wool and mohair industry in Lesotho with few players in both marketing, brokering, and distribution of the produce (Nkholise, 2020; Khotso, 2020). The drawback, however, is the fact that member associations of Lesotho National Wool and Mohair Growers Association (LNWMGA) were forced to sell their produce to one broker – BKB in the old arrangement and Lesotho Wool Centre in the new system (Nkholise, 2020). It meant therefore that although it looked cost-effective on the face of it, it had eliminated competition as the choice was minimal. Strategies and methods of control for conducting business in this manner were compromised. There is market domination because power is not distributed (Nkholise, 2020).

4.7 The Role of Government

All the respondents agreed that the role of the government of Lesotho should be that of being supportive and not destructive to the industry. They share the same sentiments that there are several ways in which government could offer a hand.

WM05 said:

“The government has to support us. They take a lot of tax from us. They must subsidise us and not destroy our business.”

WM11 said:

“I heard someone saying that pastures belong to His Majesty, the King. That is why the government wanted to destabilise the subsector. Ours is the wool. We must be allowed to choose where we want to sell our wool. The government should support our decision and not dictate to us.”

4.8 Land Allocation

On the question of who allocates land and controls pastures for their flock of sheep and goats at grazing posts, it emerged that chiefs and community councils are involved.

WM10 said:

“You have to go to the chief with your request, then he transfers you to the principal chief who will write a letter for you. Then you will have to go to the community council which will write you a ‘form C’ document.”

WM13 said:

“You just go there. The chief will allocate land to you but pastures from January to March each year we graze our flock at areas controlled by Principal Chief. Other months we are at chief’s pastures.”

The issue of land allocation and land ownership is an interesting one for Lesotho’s case as “land in Lesotho is vested in the Basotho Nation and is held in trust by the King,” Land Act No. 8 of 2010.

4.9 Challenges faced by their industry.

The study participants were asked what they view as challenges facing the wool and mohair industry and there seems to be consensus among them. These are some of the responses that were received.

WM03 said:

“Climate change is the biggest threat. The weather is so unpredictable and we are seeing extreme weather these days. Our pastures are getting finished now.”

WM07 said:

“Drought that kills our sheep is the main problem. Also, we have diseases that keep coming back even after we have given our sheep medication. In 2018 alone, my 156 sheep died because of drought.”

Lesotho saw a decline in the productivity of wool and mohair animals due to poor rangeland conditions among others (Khotso, 2020). Comparatively, the early seventies saw relatively high productivity in both crops and land as a single sheep would produce an average of 5kg of wool per year compared to 2.5kg of wool per sheep in recent years (Khotso, 2020). This is an area that is worth considering as a strategy to enhance the productivity of wool given the global demand. Lesotho needs to fill this gap.

Khotso (2020) continues to maintain that low productivity results from weakened rangelands as their levels have dropped to levels where raising large flocks has economic implications for the farmers. The situation in turn affected the income generated by wool and mohair farmers for the sale of their produce. Although wool and mohair get exported in their raw form from Lesotho to the international markets, foreign exchange earnings and injection into national output and income accounts become significant to Lesotho’s economy (Mokhethi, 2015; Khotso 2020). This condition, if not addressed, leaves the wool and mohair industry in its prone and vulnerable position with a major shortfall in both productivity volumes and loss of prominent income. The rural economy also gets affected quite negatively.

Moreover, other challenges as pointed out by Khotso (2020) include the poor standards of handling wool and mohair in the shearing of sheep and goats; classification and presentation for the sale of the commodity. For instance, compared to South Africa, after shearing, a single Lesotho sheep produces about 2.74kg of wool and 0.84kg of mohair per goat whilst South African sheep produces 4 kg and a goat produces 1.5 – 2.0 kg of mohair (IFAD, 2014; Mokhethi, 2015; Khotso, 2020). This is the impact of rangelands in Lesotho that continue to degrade over time. This poses a serious economic risk to the livelihoods of small and big farmers of wool and mohair who rely on sheep and mohair for the produce. The impact of climate change has also

been felt. Rangeland becomes overstocked by cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, and horses (Khotso, 2020).

4.10 Future Plans with their flock

All the participants indicated that they have plans to either expand or support their wool and mohair farming business on a short to long-term basis. They share the same sentiments that the future looks bright for their business as they see the potential to both make a living and be wealthy.

WM07 said:

“I aim to expand my flock by farming many Angora goats. There is a huge demand for both mohair in the world and goat meat here at home. So, that means I will shear them and sell wool at the same time.”

WM10 said:

“I need to have many income streams for that I can plough lucerne, leguminous hay, and other green plants to feed my sheep so that they can reproduce well. My target is to have at least 500 sheep.”

WM13 said:

“My plan is to buy modified rams to improve the quality of wool in my flock. Then I will in return get lot of money when I sell high quality wool in the market.”

There is potential for Lesotho’s economy to benefit more from the contribution made by the sale of wool and mohair. It should be noted that the government of Lesotho collects tax from those sales and the more high-quality products sold, the better for the economy. According to Maqalika (2022), both fibres sourced from wool and mohair make a noticeable contribution to Lesotho’s economy more specifically its GDP yet they both do not receive sufficient local attention in the application and economic impact (Maqalika, 2022). This is despite their good quality, international competitiveness, and potential to thrive.

Furthermore, efforts by institutions such as the Wool and Mohair Production Project (WAMPP) that aim to address production challenges bring hope to the industry. IFAD (2019) maintains that the project will work with farmers to improve the quality and quantity of wool and mohair produced in the country. Areas such as climate change, rangeland management, animal nutrition, breeding, good animal husbandry practices, and marketing wool and mohair production anticipate yielding positive results in the industry (IFAD, 2019).

4.11 Conclusion

This research study drew a sample of wool and mohair farmers from the Leribe district of Lesotho as study participants in this research until data saturation was reached. That is until there was no new information emerging from the interviews.

This study found that despite such a big industry, economic challenges faced by wool and mohair farmers include uncertainty in the sales of wool and mohair, delayed payments from the wool broker, distribution of wool and mohair, and political influence. This aligns with a study conducted by Maqalika (2020) who argued that delayed payments from wool and mohair broker hurt the livelihoods of sheep and goat farmers as it becomes difficult to buy medicines and vaccines for their flock, not easy to pay school fees for their children, unable to buy groceries at home and many of household activities that require income, the study found.

The Merino sheep sector makes a significant contribution to Lesotho's economic and agricultural growth yet is very challenging in a competitive and volatile economic environment. Although there is evidence that reveals that Merino sheep farmers' participation in the markets has been visibly low because of the challenges such farmers face in the farming environment yet the markets also look promising. Although the introduction of developmental strategies has proven to be important to the wool and mohair sector, it has resulted in minimal success. Commercialised Merino sheep farming remained pivotal for the government in support of farmers to enhance and broaden the participation of their produce in the international markets. There is evidence to demonstrate how the commercialisation of Merino sheep farming has the

potential to positively impact emerging farmers' livelihoods. On the other hand, the role of government came under the spotlight as there is a belief among farmers that the government has played a destructive rather than positive role.

The next chapter discusses the main conclusions of this research in line with the study objectives.

The recommendations shall also be covered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

Lesotho appears to have a competitive advantage in producing wool and mohair despite the world's production being dominated by giants such as Australia, New Zealand, China, Argentina, and others (Khotso, 2020). The country has an opportunity to improve its competitive advantage in mohair production and its exportation. The purpose of this research study was to explore the economic challenges faced by wool and mohair farmers in the Leribe district of Lesotho. It was revealed in the previous chapters that the role played by wool and mohair farmers remains eminent despite the challenges that they face. The wool and mohair revenue plays a significant role in the rural economy of Lesotho where the majority of farmers are based, as was revealed in this research. This concluding chapter shall discuss the main objectives of this research study in line with the main conclusions to be made. The stake that the government has in the wool and mohair industry is another area that needs to be considered as it will be recommended in this chapter.

5.1 Conclusions

This section discusses the research objectives of this study looking at how they have been achieved. As a recap, this study aims to investigate economic challenges faced by wool and mohair farmers.

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- To explore the economic challenges faced by wool and mohair farmers in the Leribe district of Lesotho;
- To investigate how delays in payment of the sale of wool and mohair have affected the farmers;
- To assess the impact of the newly enacted regulations on the wool and mohair industry;
- To explore the challenges faced by the farmers in the sale and distribution of their wool and mohair; and
- To ascertain farmers' views on the role of the Lesotho government in creating a conducive business environment for the industry to thrive.

5.1.1 Economic challenges faced by wool and mohair farmers in Lesotho

This research study has revealed that delayed revenue for the sale of wool and mohair hurts the farmers. It becomes difficult for the farmers to keep and maintain their flock's needs or lifestyle including to keep their families out of poverty as revealed by this study. The rural economy is affected by the situation because the majority of these farmers have their livelihoods in the rural areas where they reside. It is the wool and mohair brokering company that remains in the middle of the transaction because it takes raw wool and mohair from the farmers, sells the products at an auction for prices determined by the markets and process receives revenue, and then transfers it to the owners of the produce. In most cases, producers do not even attend such auctions and they would merely rely on after-auction explanatory reports received together with the payments. The farmers do not even know whether they receive an amount that is fair or they get underpaid.

5.1.2 Impact of delays in payment on wool and mohair farmers

As has been discussed in the section above and throughout this research study, delayed revenue has dire consequences for farmers and those relying on that revenue for their economic survival. The impact of delayed payments goes beyond the economic factors. It has psycho-social implications for individual farmer households because their children's education and social relations are affected too. The previous chapter indicated that farmers mentioned that their flock was negatively impacted by delayed payments from the sale of their raw wool and mohair. That is, they were not able to buy vaccines and other essentials for their flock to improve productivity.

5.1.3 Impact of newly enacted industry regulations has affected the industry

The change of regulation that happened in the year 2018 had far-reaching consequences for the farmers as they were forced to sell their wool and mohair produce to solely the local broker. That change was felt by many stakeholders as it caused a lot of pressure on the government as revealed by this study. Despite the government promising the farmers that the change was important and would result in greater returns for both Lesotho's economy and farmers, the opposite was felt. This study revealed that the majority of the farmers did not receive their

payments for the sale of their produce. A small percentage of them indicated having received far less than what they expected, without proper explanation either from the Chinese brokering company or the government itself. All the study participants were affected by the underpayment and no payment at all for the sale of their products (wool and mohair) by the broker.

Moreover, the new regulation of 2018 as discussed in the previous chapters attempted to localise sales and auctioning of raw wool and mohair. In enacting the regulations, the government of Lesotho banned the export of locally produced wool and mohair if the products were not prepared, brokered, and auctioned in the country. So, Lesotho Wool Centre which was managed by a Chinese national was given a monopoly to auction farmer's raw wool and mohair. This strategy did not go according to plan as farmers protested against the government of Lesotho for non-payment of sales of their wool and mohair by Lesotho Wool Centre.

Moreover, the conceptualisation of localising the wool and mohair industry was a good one. But its implementation left a lot to be desired. A lot of farmers felt betrayed by the government coalition of political parties that forced them into a monopolistic approach that was not well-thought.

5.1.4 Transportation and storage of their raw wool and mohair

This study revealed that once sheep and goats from the farmers are sheared, their wool and mohair get weighed, classified, and stored at the shearing shed. Then raw wool and mohair get transported to the district warehouse in bales awaiting a bigger horse truck to fill up at 180 bales for transit to BKB in Port Elizabeth, South Africa where it will be stored, weighed, and put into different class categories ready for auction at the international market. It is the South African broker, BKB that sells the wool and mohair at an auction held from time to time. Then BKB pays the wool and mohair farmers as it has been discovered in this study. This approach has been going on for more than four decades until interrupted by the new regulation but has since recommenced after the government backed down to pressure. The government was left with no option by to reverse its decision following pressure from the farmers to allow them to sell their raw wool and mohair through channels of their choice.

5.1.5 Farmers' view on the role of government in industry.

It is the farmers understanding that the government of Lesotho does have a role to play in the wool and mohair industry, but such a role has to be limited to a supportive one. This includes making policies that promote the growth and development of the industry. It should be noted that Lesotho as a small and developing country needs to realise how important the wool industry has become in contributing not only to GDP but also to the rural economy. Several families depend on revenue from wool and mohair for their household survival. Any attempt by the government to disrupt the industry negatively would be suicidal for a country with such high levels of poverty in Lesotho.

Further, there are ways in which the government can provide support to farmers including enhancing veterinary services, promoting breeding of better-quality sheep and goats, and looking at ways in which such an industry gets expanded. This in return would mean government benefits through taxes collected from the sale of the produce. This could be a win-win situation for both farmers and the government.

5.2 Recommendations

Despite the challenges that sheep and goat farmers face, their role remains eminent in ensuring that wool and mohair production continues. There is real potential for Lesotho to become one of the main producers of wool and mohair in the world. There is a need for commitment from all stakeholders involved. This section discusses the main recommendations made for this research study.

5.2.1 Role of government

The government of Lesotho needs to define its role and position itself quite well in the wool and mohair industry. This research study does not offer a conclusive position of government. Over the years wool and mohair farmers have been allowing BKB to do the auctioning for them in a foreign land, South Africa. One of the major criticisms that BKB received was the fact that it has

always been difficult to trace actual data trends of Lesotho's wool and mohair sales. The government of Lesotho felt that the whole process was not transparent as there was a lot of crucial information, important for the government, that BKB was holding on to.

Moreover, a government-owned approach to localise the auctioning process anticipated good benefits for Lesotho as it would attract buyers (mostly foreign) to come to Lesotho; farmers would have their produce right in front of their eyes. It would position the country itself well in the foreign markets, and all local stakeholders (including government, farmers, researchers, and development partners) would have access to data on auction trends as the process would have been locally controlled.

Having said that, this research report submits that the government needs to rethink its role and position in attempting to influence how the wool and mohair industry operates. Whether to control it or adopt a laissez-faire feature. Also, the government of Lesotho has to approach the localisation of the wool and mohair industry differently. A more collaborative approach other than a dictatorial one would be more suited. The government should involve all stakeholders including the main ones – farmers, academia, and development partners if that is to see light. On the face of it, the approach has more benefits that are likely to be all-encompassing and thus be enjoyed by farmers, the government, and the economy in general. If implemented well, it is likely to be a win-win situation for all. The certification of the wool process, localisation of wool testing, and auctioning process need to be rethought.

5.2.3 Farmers in auctioning of their produce

The wool and mohair farmers seem to have little to no knowledge of the auction process of their produce. They leave their wool and mohair at a shearing shed for storage and wait until they get paid an amount, they are individually told is the worth of their products. It is the researcher's view farmers need to be more involved in understanding the auctioning process by educating themselves on how that unfolds. Also, farmers need to educate themselves about the international market performance of wool and mohair seeing that this is and has been the

business they are in currently and for years to come. This will help them make better predictions of their expected revenue from sales.

Furthermore, there is so much reliance by local farmers on the South African broker to auction their produce. There is a need to open the market a bit wider to have more brokers registered and licensed by the government to benefit the farmers. The use of modern technology such as livestreaming auctions as it happens for the benefit of the farmers and stakeholders could prove to be useful. Thus, modern technology allows for the sharing of information promptly and as developments unfold.

Moreover, the current practice is that the South African broker takes bulk raw wool and mohair from Lesotho farmers then auctions the produce to the international world. This increases the volume of exports for South Africa and less for Lesotho. This is one area that needs attention by the government of Lesotho to improve the country's balance of payments.

5.2.4 Marketing of wool and mohair subsector

This subsector remains under-marketed. There needs to be an effort made by the wool and mohair association to take part in the marketing of wool and mohair sales. The subsector must attract young people and women to enhance capacity through training and business development. This will improve the value chain of the sector. Thus, young people need to be attracted into the sector at fundamental phases such as shearing, classification, and weighing of wool and mohair. This will likely help not only reduce unemployment among young people in Lesotho but also promote wool and mohair as a business and not be viewed as a drive for subsistence. Young people are likely to make a better contribution to the sector with new innovative ideas on how the processing and marketing of wool and mohair could be done differently to benefit the sector. Youth are the future fort-holders for the said business.

Furthermore, the use of technology in line with the fourth industrial revolution to market the wool and mohair sector in Lesotho remains an untapped opportunity. There is more that young people could be involved in to enhance the value chain of the sector by the use of modern

technology. This will open a worldwide window of opportunities for local wool and mohair producers.

5.3 Conclusion

The wool and mohair farmers are at the heart of the subsector as they also contribute to the rural economy and the country's GDP through the revenue they receive from the sale of their produce. This closing chapter made conclusions that the sector needs to be improved to yield better production in both quality and quantity of wool and mohair as the two largest agricultural commodities. The role of the government of Lesotho has to be limited to that of leveling the playing ground for both the producers or farmers, brokers, and other stakeholders and not be dictatorial. The government of Lesotho has to position itself in a manner that allows the wool and mohair sector to grow.

Further, this study has revealed that while there is potential to thrive, the wool and mohair industry is not without economic challenges. The previous chapter indicated that such economic challenges have far-reaching impacts on the farmers' lifestyles both in their households and on their flock and have high maintenance costs in an ever-changing economic climate.

It is thoughtful for several farmers to have more than one income stream as highlighted in the Findings chapter. Every business has its challenges especially when its financial control is out of its hands. Should one mainstream of wool revenue be faced with challenges, the other income streams will fill the gap.

There are efforts by the Wool and Mohair Promotion Project (WAMPP) of Lesotho, working together with stakeholders in the government, private sector, and farmer groups and individuals to improve the quality and quantity of both wool and mohair (IFAD, 2019). These efforts include enhancing better communication with farmers, animal nutrition, animal health and livestock extension services, and access to basic services (clean running water at shearing sites), among others (IFAD, 2019).

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Questions.

Introductory Questions

1. Tell me a bit about your history of wool and mohair production?
2. How many sheep and goats do you have?
3. Which product do you mainly specialize in? Wool and/or mohair?
4. Where did your interest in wool/ and mohair production come from?

Research-specific questions

5. How has production been like in the past 5 years?
6. What is your production sales range? Please tick appropriate range.
a) R0 – R20, 000 b) R20, 001 – R40, 000 c) R40, 001 – R80, 000 d) R80, 001 – R100, 000
e) R100, 001 – R500, 000 f) +R500, 000 – R1m
7. How do you use your profits after selling your production?
8. How do you ensure that your sheep and/or goats stay in good production shape?
9. How often do you shear your sheep?
10. Please explain to me the production challenges you face.
11. What is the role of the wool and mohair broker?
12. What is the turn-around time of receiving your monies after selling?
13. What are the main economic challenges facing the industry?
14. How have the challenges affected you and your production?
15. What has the impact of newly-enacted Wool regulations of 2018 been to the industry?
16. What is the role of government in creating conducive environment for industry to thrive?
17. How is grazing land allocated?
18. What do you envisage as ideal role of government in this regard?
19. According to you, how can some of the mentioned challenges be overcome?
20. Do you plan on increasing you flock in anticipated returns of profits?

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Good day Sir / Madam

My name is Thabiso Nyapisi. I am a Master of Business Administration student at University of Kwazulu Natal at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership. As part of my studies, I am currently undertaking a study on economic challenges faced by wool and mohair producers in the Leribe district of Lesotho.

As a wool and mohair producer, you have been selected to participate in this study. Thank you for your time. This interview will take about an hour of your time.

I am bound by ethical considerations of this study to mention to you that:

1. Your participation in this study is voluntary;
2. While your answers are important for the study, you have a right to not answer certain questions if you feel like or withdraw/terminate your participation completely at any point during the interview;
3. Your participation in the study shall remain anonymous and confidential;
4. Raw data collected from the interview shall be saved safely onto a password-protected computer. Access to such data shall be limited to my supervisor and myself;

Therefore, by signing this form you acknowledge that the purpose and ethical considerations of the study have been explained to you and you fully understand them.

I,(name of study participant), declare that the purpose of the study and its ethical considerations have been explained to me and voluntarily participate in the study.

Signature

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Date

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