

An Evaluation of the Organisational Capability of Indigenous Sugarcane Farmers: The Case of Sugarcane Farmers in Chiredzi, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The study sought to identify organisational capabilities necessary for smallholder sugarcane farmers in Chiredzi District, Zimbabwe. The framework of this study was both a quantitative and qualitative study, following stratified random sampling of three hundred and twenty-six participants. A structured questionnaire was deployed to collect primary data and complemented by interviews, focus groups and document inspection. Data was analysed through the SPSS. To complement the information provided by smallholder farmers, interviews were conducted with two Tongaat Hulett Zimbabwe officials, two Government representatives and six farmers' association representatives. The findings of the study indicated that out-growers do not possess adequate organisational capabilities to enhance their production. Business planning, financial management, leadership and governance, innovation and workforce development and proper farming techniques were among the capabilities that were lacking. The recommendation made to smallholder farmers included the engagement of full-time farm managers or supervisors with knowledge in agronomy and farm management to improve business planning capabilities. The government and other sugarcane industry stakeholders were also urged to establish a school of agriculture in Chiredzi District, to assist in the training of smallholder farmers since a greater number did not have a background in sugarcane farming. A longitudinal research on how organisational capabilities develop into strategy formulation about small firm's performance was also suggested as further studies for academia.

Key words: Organisational Capabilities, Smallholder Sugarcane Farmers

Introduction

The Government of Zimbabwe embarked on the land reform programme in 2001 and about 850 people benefited from the sugarcane estates under the A2 commercial small-scale settlement model in Chiredzi District, to date, the number of A2 sugarcane farmers have increased to 1200 all farming 24 000 hectares while Tongaat Hullet Zimbabwe is farming on 25 000 hectares. However, there is a notable reduction in both the quality and quantity of sugarcane production amongst out-growers. The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Lands, Agriculture, Resettlement and Water Development conducted a fact-finding study between 8 and 11 May 2006, to assess the viability of the sugar industry and to find out the challenges being faced by new farmers. This resulted in the agriculture policy being put in place to address issues concerning sugarcane production, marketing and trade. It is against this background that this research will assess the trends in sugarcane production and the internal challenges faced by commercial smallholder sugarcane farmers. A detailed literature

scan revealed that studies on organisational capabilities have focused more on large corporations with limited attention being paid to the Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the agricultural sector. A study by Tuan (2010) analysed organisational capabilities, competitive advantage and performance in supporting industries in Vietnam. Pasmore (2014) also studied organisational capabilities that matter for most financial performance. The study targeted broad sectors such as consumer goods, health care, financial services and energy in the developed world. On the other hand, those studies that have been carried out on SMEs with particular reference to smallholder sugarcane farming, have not analysed their organisational capabilities but indicated the significance of organisational capabilities in their findings.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the body of knowledge on the relationship between organisational capabilities and the performance of Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs). From a practical point of view, the study benefited stakeholders involved in sugarcane production in Zimbabwe including the Government and other support institutions. The Government may draw insights on its roles in supporting smallholder sugarcane farmers and the development of appropriate policy interventions to stimulate the development and growth of smallholder sugarcane production. The support institutions could design and implement strategies to promote the survival and growth of smallholder farms. The smallholder commercial farmers will be assisted in adopting strategies and management practices to capacitate themselves for their survival and growth in the current challenging times in Zimbabwe.

The general research objective was to gain insight into organisational capabilities that affect the productivity of small-scale sugarcane farmers in Chiredzi District. The specific research objectives were to

- To identify organisational capabilities of importance in small-scale sugarcane farming and how they affect productivity.
- To analyse the factors influencing or affecting the development of organisational capabilities for smallholder sugarcane farmers in Chiredzi District.
- To assess how organisational capabilities for smallholder sugarcane farmers can be developed.

The study's hypothesis was:

H₀: Organisational capabilities are not associated with the performance of smallholder sugarcane farmers.

H₁: Organisational capabilities are significantly associated with the performance of smallholder sugarcane farmers.

Literature Review

Organisational Capabilities Necessary for Small-holder Sugarcane Production

Roghe (2012) says there are twenty key organisational capabilities necessary for organisational performance namely: leadership performance, cross-functional collaboration mechanisms, employee motivation, corporate culture, employee performance management, process optimisation, the role of the centre, succession planning, adaptability and flexibility, organisational structure, change management capability, layers and spans of control, the role of clarity, business analytics and information management, middle management effectiveness, recruitment, information networks, project management and shared services,

offshoring and outsourcing. Treacy and O'Hare (2014) identified leadership, strategy and delivery as key enablers for successful performance in an organisation. Amongst the twenty organisational capabilities and three enablers, eight organisational capabilities were formulated that would address viability issues amongst small-scale sugarcane farmers namely Financial Management, Workforce Planning, Leadership and Governance, Innovation and Strategic Planning as these affect the operational management of smallholder sugarcane farmers in Zimbabwe.

Financial Management Capability

Being financially capable is a crucial step, especially for organisations finding themselves in difficult financial situations as currently being experienced in Zimbabwe. Financial capability is essential to smallholder sugarcane farmers faced with some complex financial decisions. The farmer needs to embrace financial management practices to generate long-term stability and for the farm to operate profitably. Nazir et al (2013) say that there is a reduction in the cost of sugarcane production and financial management practises that are key to operational viability amongst small-scale farmers. Waweru and Ngugi (2014) explained that financial management influences performance and advancing the profit objectivity of the business entity. Financial management should be encompassed in the overall organisational strategic formulation since it impacts the firm's performance (Karadag 2015). Strategic financial management can be described as the identification of possible strategies capable of maximising an organisation's net present value, the allocation of scarce capital resources between competing opportunities and the implementation and monitoring of chosen strategy to achieve stated objectives (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants of UK, 2015). According to Karadag (2015), most small-scale sugarcane farmers lack funding compounded with poor financial planning and feasibility analyses before making investment decisions, poor financial records keeping and lack of analyses of financial reports due to insufficient financial knowledge. Waweru and Ngugi (2014) established that financial innovation, working capital, investment and risk management affect the performance of micro and small enterprises. This entails that the financial capability of smallholder sugarcane farmers is most likely influenced by the value drivers and cost drivers. Farmers need to be much more familiar with the impact of their day-to-day financial decisions on the performance of their sugarcane farms. The financial management capability ensures organisations pay attention to decisions regarding investments in the assets of the firm and how such investments should be financed. According to Sahin (2011), small enterprises finance their working capital needs through equity financing, individual loans and other external sources such as the family. Each type of loan carries associated risks and costs. Risk can be seen as the possibility of economic or financial losses or gains, as a consequence of the uncertainty associated with pursuing a course of action (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants of UK, 2015). For smallholder sugarcane farmers in Chiredzi, these sources might turn out to be risky resulting in the farmers failing to fulfil their financial obligations.

Leadership and Governance Capability

Whitepaper (2015) says leadership refers to the person or group of people who directs an organization at the highest level. Bourgoyne et al (2004) on the contrary revealed that the idea of leadership embodies both the heroic leader at the top level and the brave foot soldier. The term 'leadership' is described in the more transformational aspects of management at any level, especially the motivation of employees and the management of change. Leadership provides the organization with direction, inspiration, understanding and guidance to

employees in achieving the firm's vision (Bourgoyne, 2004). For smallholder sugarcane farms to remain sustainable they heavily depend upon capable leadership to guide them through unprecedented changes. Some of the best and most venerable farms are failing to adapt to change and future uncertainties, pointing to something to do with the leadership. According to Pasmore (2014), having all of the leadership positions on the organization chart filled will not produce the leadership that is required to fulfil organizational goals and objectives. He highlighted that collective leadership capabilities of leaders acting together in groups and across boundaries are required to implement strategies, solve problems, respond to threats, adapt to change and support innovation.

Business Planning Capability

Smallholder sugarcane farmers need to establish business plans which act as long-term blueprints that guide farm activities. Strategic and operational plans will also assist the smallholder sugarcane farmers in assessing their performance and monitoring progress and future projections. Johnson et al (2008) defined strategy as the direction and scope of an organisation over the long term that achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competencies with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder expectations. Planning involves a process of developing an organisational strategy and making the essential decisions relating to the allocation of resources to successfully attain strategic goals (Johnson et al, 2008). The business planning capability enables the organisation to set direction and articulate measurable company goals and objectives. Smallholder sugarcane farmers' planning capability provides direction and help in the allocation of farm resources through stipulated goals and policies. Organisations react differently to uncertainties in the external environment. In responding strategically to the environment, the organisation's strategic plan can choose to formulate and execute the blue ocean strategy or the red ocean strategy. The blue ocean strategy denotes strategies that result in the creation of new markets and the red ocean represents markets which are fairly similar and rivals are battling for a shrinking profit pool. The red ocean strategy represents all or most industries in existence today. Johnson et al, (2008) challenged the smallholder sugarcane farmers that they need to transform and execute blue ocean strategies. Blue ocean strategy-oriented organisations focus on demand creation, focus differentiation, value innovation, untapped market space and the opportunity for high profits. Teece (2011) highlighted that performance is generally conceptualised as the rents a firm accrues as a result of the implementation of its strategies, whereas competitive advantage is conceptualised as the implementation of a strategy not currently being implemented by other firms that facilitate the reduction of costs, the exploitation of market opportunities and neutralisation of threats. Smallholder sugarcane farmers do not compete amongst themselves, but they collectively compete on the world market through the exports of sugar by Tongaat Hulett Zimbabwe (Tongaatt Hulett Integrated Report, 2015). The collective adoption of this strategic focus by commercial smallholder sugarcane farmers will create the development of a business planning capability. As highlighted by Helfat (2022), the implications for capability development are that the strategic intent creates the linkage between resources and performance aspirations. Plans that are consistent with organisational objectives will effectively help in delivering strategic outcomes (APS, 2003).

Workforce Planning and Development Capability

Workforce planning is a systematic process for identifying, acquiring, developing, and retaining employees to meet the needs of the organization. Jacobs and Hawky (2006) defined

workforce development as the coordination of public and private sector policies and programmes that provide individuals with opportunities for sustainable livelihood and help organisations achieve exemplary goals consistent with societal context. Planning and development is an effort to focus on the strategic human resource allocation for both short and long term, yet allow for flexibility in a changing environment. Workforce planning and development as a proactive approach can assist smallholder sugarcane farmers in ensuring that the right people with the right farming competencies and skills are in place, when and where they want them, to achieve their business plans. According to the Australian National Farmers' Federation report (2014), the major capacity constraint to the agriculture sector is the ongoing supply of skilled and unskilled labour, in the context of a rapidly ageing workforce. In the workforce development sense, the industry faces a looming crisis in several sectors due to the ageing of its people and skilled workers exiting the industry. People are recognised and developed as the key drivers of sustained business success. In Agriculture and Agro-processing sectors, workforce planning and development is widely recognised as being critical in ensuring sustainability and it is also considered the backbone for growing skills and other capabilities. In the sugar industry, endemic issues related to community perception of the industry, lack of knowledge and understanding of the agriculture sector and consequent poor uptake of agriculture careers are some of the factors affecting the building and maintenance of a flexible and skilled workforce for the industry (SACGA Report, 2014/15).

Innovation Capability

Hage (1999) innovation can be a new product, a new service, a new technology or a new administrative practice. It can also act as a mechanism by which the organization produce new products, new processes and systems required for adapting to changes in markets, technologies and modes of competition. For smallholder sugarcane farmers, innovation involves adopting new farming methods, and processes and the acquiring of new technology in farming. Innovation occurs if the organization has innovation capability, appropriate employees who work sufficiently and effective management. A lack of effective innovative management may result in malfunctions as the majority of failures in innovation are due to weaknesses in the management of the innovation processes (Tidd and Bessant, 2009). This entails that the innovation capability of smallholder sugarcane producers is a multifaceted phenomenon which calls for attention of many aspects by the farm's management. Schienstock (2009) argued that the fact that economic success relies on a firm organizational capability, causes their improvement a legitimate object of innovation policy. This is supported by Roghe et al (2012) who indicated that an online survey by Boston Consultant Group (BCG) in more than 35 countries reflected that over 35% of business leaders are trailed by economic uncertainty, while the rest worry about increasing complexity and the rate of innovation. Given this situation, the key to creating sustained competitive advantage is likely to lie with those organizations that continuously innovate. As the knowledge economy, considerable technological advance, and global competition have become recurrent features in the sugarcane farming business in Chiredzi District, the pressure for innovation has also considerably increased to become a centre for business. Zimbabwe is an agro-based economy and smallholder farmers cannot be spared from the necessity to possess the innovation capability as a way to improve sugarcane production. Accordingly, those organisations with a higher rate of change in innovation capability are, on average, two times more profitable than other firms (Tidd and Bessant, 2009). Different organizational levels such as competitive environment, strategy, task complexity and management style reflect that the innovation processes vary across organisations and these processes are likely to exist in varying degrees in the organisations. However, regardless of these varying degrees all organisations today

fight to reduce costs through innovation since technological innovations result in reduction, minimisation and to some extent elimination of waste and improvement of product quality. Dadfar et al (2013) deduced that a firm that derives its technology from external and internal sources has high performance. This motion is supported by Yung and Lai (2002) who claim processes of coordination and innovations, learning from external sources, and practising on an accumulation of core competencies have shaped the best performers in the industry.

Collaboration Capability

Collaboration capability involves the firm's ability to establish trust-oriented integration and/or reconfigure internal and external competencies with a wide range of stakeholders to address rapidly changing environments. It is positively related to the firm's ability to create value as measured by the firm's performance (Allred et al, 2011). The value creation processes have become more interlinked and complicated implying the need to fully rely on the integration across the supply chain. The collaboration capabilities concept suggests the need to work effectively both inter-functional and cross-functional to enable knowledge creation and networking in an uncertain environment. Snow (2015) emphasized collaboration noting that combining different perspectives promotes understanding of complex or multi-faceted issues which can lead to new ideas. Management practices which build platforms for integration and coordination enables employees to tackle complex tasks. Collaborating firms often perform well and enjoy profits jointly generated in an exchange relationship that cannot be generated by either firm in isolation (Snow, 2015). The relational profit benefits are determined by the degree of investments in assets, the degree of knowledge exchange, the extent of combining complementary scarce resources or capabilities and the extent of effective governance mechanism. Snow (2015) indicated that many scholars have studied the existence of collaborative capabilities under slightly different labels which include relational capability, alliance capability and collaborative know-how. Collaboration and alliances at the organisational level realise the importance of more intangible aspects of a corporation such as trust, reputation and goodwill. The existence of these intangible aspects amongst some small-scale sugarcane farmers in Chiredzi may explain why some organisations/farmers perform better than others when engaged in close collaboration activities.

Performance Management Capability

Continuous market change and technology are the principal reasons for the transformation of staff performance management to the new strategic role (Analoni, 2002). The traditional staff management emphasised solely on physical skills, individual efficiency and quality. However, the emerging staff performance management idea stresses the total contribution to the firm, creative behavior, overall effectiveness, cross-functional integration and human resources as a strategic partner. Analoni (2002) added that the traditional perspective on staff management pays more attention to tasks at the expense of people and their development as strategic resources to the organisation. Performance management capability is a result-oriented process that clarifies what employees need to achieve at the organisational level. It involves the ability to match organisational objectives with the agreed employee's performance objectives, skills requirement and development plan. Personnel management policies and processes should be documented and communicated, and continuous professional development of staff should be adopted as an organization's priority. Staff participation in the decision-making process supported by transparent and consensus-oriented systems, defines the firm's priorities and organises its objectives. Johnson et al (2008) argued that it is not enough simply to adjust performance management processes and policies to

support changing strategies. Hence, managers need to be able and willing to envisage a future where the strategies and performance of the organisation are transformed by exploiting the performance management capabilities of an organisation better than its competitors. The strategic intent of performance management is to enable continuous discussion on individual and work group performance to identify ways to improve this performance while creating a feedback loop within which it is measured, evaluated and improved. Mentoring and coaching as part of performance management capability can provide an environment that will attract a workforce which in turn provides new ways of competing in the market.

Methodology

This study incorporated a mixed methods paradigm to benefit from the strengths of these two approaches. In so doing, a pragmatism philosophy was adopted since the study is both objective and subjective in nature. The core objective of the study was to ascertain the relationship between organisational capabilities and commercial smallholder sugarcane production. A survey was conducted to establish the nature of the existing conditions in the study, which are organizational capabilities for smallholder sugarcane farmers. The researcher used three different research techniques to acquire specific information about the study and to evaluate different courses of action. The research techniques used were descriptive research, causal research, and exploratory research. A total sample of three hundred and twenty-six (336) participants was drawn from a population of one thousand three hundred (1300). Twenty (20) research participants provided qualitative data while three hundred and sixteen (316) provided quantitative data. Probability and non-probability sampling methods were applied by the researcher in selecting a sample that was a true representation of the entire population. Random sampling was used to select smallholder farmers. Purposive sampling was used to select participants from support institutions, the government and Tongaat Hulett Zimbabwe.

Four distinct methods were used for data collection and generation, namely survey through a questionnaire, interviews, focus groups and document inspection. The obtained data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) template which was designed using the questionnaire and running frequency tables in the SPSS version 20. Variances, percentages and the mean were used for data interpretation and the information was presented using tables, graphs, charts and testing of hypothesis. A chi-square-based test Cramer's V regression was used to test for association whilst logistic regression was also used to establish relationships.

Results and discussion

Organisational capabilities and smallholder sugarcane performance

The respondents' opinion on questions that relate to their performance was reflected in Table 1. These questions aimed to seek the association between smallholder farmers' capabilities and performance. The results are presented on a scale of 1-5 representing strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree and strongly agree.

Table 1: Responses on smallholder farmers' performance

Performance indicator	% Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	5
G1. My farm makes a profit annually after deducting all costs.	12.0	19.0	20.0	40.0	9.0
G2. The farm workers have been employed since the past three farming seasons.	3.0	26.0	7.0	38.0	26.0
G3. The sugarcane produced has high sugar content as required.	0	6.0	10.0	54.0	30.0
G4. I produce more than the average of 100 tonnes of sugarcane per hectare.	2.0	21.0	7.0	48.0	22.0

Source: SPSS Output

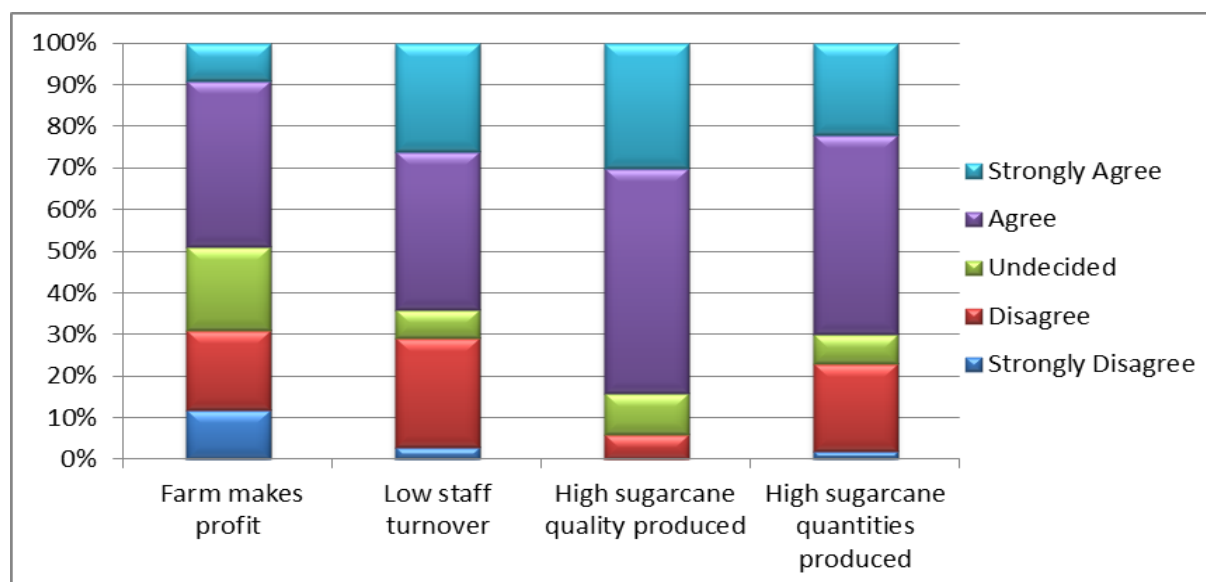
Figure 1. Pictorial presentation of the findings.

Figure 1: Smallholder farmers' performance indicators
(Source: Author)

In terms of whether the firm is making a profit after deduction of all cost, 40% confirmed in agreement whilst 9% strongly agreed and 22% were neutral. A remaining 31% disagreed including 12% who strongly disagreed. This implied that average farmers were making a profit in sugarcane production. Some of respondent who highlighted that they were neutral on the issue, commented on the open question that they were experiencing high inputs cost which was making it difficult to determine their profitability. Focus group deliberations also revealed that high cost of production, uncontrolled expenditure and inability to plan were the hindering factor in terms of farm's profitability. Nazir et al (2013) cited inputs costs as a factor affecting performance of smallholder farmers. Farmers with appropriate organizational capabilities are the ones who are making a profit as proved by the Cramer's V test on table 4.2 below. Generally, profitability of sugarcane farmers is influence by their organisational capabilities. Relatedly, with regard to the question which wanted to unearth the workers' turnover. On the one hand, 3% strongly disagreed that they had hired their employees for the past three years. The result showed that 26% disagreed with 7% undecided. On the other hand, 38% expressed that they had a lower workers' turnover with an addition of 26% who

strongly agreed. A total of 64% were in agreement revealed that the workers were to some degree motivated by the positive performance of the farmer. Hayes (2008) agreed that increased staff commitment and loyalty is of a sign of increased performance and productivity. However, this is not always true as low rate of staff turnover may be a result of external forces such as high unemployment rate. In summary, turnover revealed that some farmers were performing well whilst others are not.

Most farmers highlighted that they produce quality sugarcane, as evidenced by 30% who strongly agreed that their sugarcane has a high sugar content. 54% also agreed, 10% were undecided and only 6% disagreed. This implied that 84% of the respondents were in supporting that the sugarcane they produce has higher sugar content. Relatedly, 80% also agreed that their production was above the average of 100t/hectare. 23% disputed this expression with 7% reserved on the issue. These findings were disapproved by all interviews and focus group conducted as it came to the researcher's knowledge that most farmers are not aware of the tonnage or sugar content they produce since the weighing and lab test are done solely by Tongaat Hulett. Additionally, the farmers were not making follow ups to ascertain their sugarcane tonnage and estimated recoverable crystal rate, which determined the sugar content. Therefore, the finding disclosed most farmers were finding it difficult to produce high tonnage and quality sugarcane. “

Hypothesis Testing

H₁: Organizational capabilities and the performance of smallholder sugarcane farmers.

Table 2: Cramer's V: Association between Organisational Capabilities and the Performance of Smallholder farmers

Capability	Cramer's V	p-value	Decision
Business Planning Capability	0.597	0.000	Excellent Association
Leadership and Governance Capability	0.389	0.000	Very Strong Association
Innovation Capability	0.231	0.021	Moderate Association
Workforce planning Capability	0.092	0.359	Very Weak Association
Financial Management Capability	0.438	0.000	Very Strong Association

Source: SPSS Output

Table 2 above shows that the performance of smallholder sugarcane farmers is significantly associated with the following capabilities: Business planning, leadership capability and financial management capability. However, there is moderate association between innovation and performance and weak association between workforce planning and the performance of smallholder sugarcane farmers.

The regression Model

Table 3. Regression Coefficients Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Business Planning Step 1 ^a (1)	3.243	.605	28.757	1	.000	25.600
Constant	-1.386	.500	7.687	1	.006	.250

Source: SPSS Output

The regression model is given by the equation
Performance = -1.386+3.243Business Planning.

The regression model shows that although performance is associated with a number of capabilities, business planning is crucial for the performance of smallholder sugarcane farmers. The main objectives of the study were to establish three things namely: the organisational capabilities for commercial smallholder sugarcane farmers in the Chiredzi district, the factors influencing organisational capabilities for commercial smallholder sugarcane farmers and to suggest improvements of the organisational capabilities for smallholder sugarcane farmers. It was established that most sugarcane farmers do not possess adequate organisational capabilities to enhance their production. The study unveiled that business planning, financial management, leadership and governance, innovation and workforce development were some of the capabilities that were lacking amongst most smallholder sugarcane farmers. The research also determined that business planning is more crucial for the performance of smallholder sugarcane farmers. However, the study revealed that there is a moderate association between innovation and performance and a weak association between workforce planning and the performance of smallholder sugarcane farmers. Concerning factors that influenced the development of the organisational capabilities of smallholder sugarcane farmers, it was established that the external environment had the most influence on organisational capabilities. Other factors that were established included leadership, resources, training and organisational learning, organisational culture and talent management. The study also noted the absence of process documentation and formalisation of farm procedures was further weakening these capabilities.

Conclusion and recommendations

Sugarcane farmers are operating in Zimbabwe's turbulent environment that requires dynamic capabilities to survive. Conclusions are that the turbulent environment compounded with a lack of the following operational capabilities is affecting sugarcane farmers' productivity and viability:

- **Business Planning.** Most small-scale sugarcane farmers lack a short term and long-term operational roadmap. They do not have a vision, mission and strategic intent hence employees do not know or understand what is to be achieved and how.
- **Leadership and Governance.** The farmer has failed to become profitable and sustainable enterprises that are able to provide profitable products due to lack of leadership and ethical farming and business practices.
- **Innovation.** Small scale sugarcane farmers lacked the capability to adopt new innovative technology and processes for effectiveness and efficiency. Hence since year 2000, farmers have not yet adopted innovative advancement such as precision farming techniques using centre pivots.

- **Workforce Development.** Farmers did not invest in supporting employees in agriculture related learning, access to the tools and resources required to ensure a sustainable workforce. In the event that a farmer employs people with experience and knowledge of sugarcane farming, limited farmers retain them.
- **Financial Management.** There is an attempt by farmers to do proper financial management and record keeping, but this is not done according to the general accounting principles since some do not have the education background or some form of training in financial management. Hence this distorts the whole decision-making process of the farm, there are no annual budgets made to match the farm's financial needs with the business plans, no prices comparisons before buying inputs and a limited number of farmers manage their financial obligations including paying ZIMRA taxes and NSSA levies in time.

In light of the above, to enhance business planning capability, smallholder farmers should hire full time farm managers or supervisors with knowledge in agronomy and farm management. This will help in setting up a proper business structure that will deal with issues of leadership, innovations, human resources management and financial management. Further, farmers themselves need to be knowledgeable landowners, the government and other sugarcane industry stakeholders should establish a school of agriculture in Chiredzi district. This will assist in the training of smallholder farmers since a greater number do not have background in sugarcane farming and basic management. Since sugarcane is a strategic crop, the government should also facilitate low interest loan facilities for farm mechanisation and adoption of technology. Furthermore, there is need to for the issuance of security of tenure document which will facilitate access to bank loans. The academia also has a pivotal role to play, research is still open on new varieties that increases yields and drought tolerant, coming up with training manuals that are specifically tailor made for the sugarcane farming and these should cover both agronomy and agronomy management.

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