

A qualitative analysis of the sourcing practices used to ensure a sustainable supply of herbs and spices in the production of a South African food manufacturer.

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Declaration:

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelor of Commerce Honours degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

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Abstract

Climate variability and change negatively affects the ability of farmers to produce crops (Makate, Makate & Mango, 2017, 1). This inability to produce crops would affect businesses that rely on key raw materials from farmers, as no raw material equals no product to sell. To cope with these challenges, farmers and businesses that rely on each other must practise sustainable farming and sourcing techniques.

The sample used for the study was a South African food manufacturer. The data was collected using an interview schedule, as this enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer in creating a sustainable supply of herbs and spices for production.

The study found that the South African food manufacturer developed the BBBEE Enterprise Development Farmers Project the intent to enhance South African farmers capabilities to supply the herbs and spices needed for the company. For the critical herbs and spices such as corridor, bell peppers, and chilli the South African food manufacturer has created several projects that will ensure a sustainable supply for the future.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Contextualisation

The following research study looked at how a South African food manufacturer can create a secure and consistent supply of quality raw materials from farmers to ensure a sustainable future.

There are key issues constantly challenging agriculture, such as poor farming techniques that destroy land, poor quality standards and unsustainable use of water to name a few (Clemenson & van der Bie, 2018: 24). These poor practises put the supply of raw materials at risk which would have significant impacts on a business in the future. It is these risks that are causing businesses to move towards sustainable sourcing practises. The reasons for moving towards sustainable sourcing assures quality sourcing and consistency, ability to achieve sustainable goals, and ensures food safety towards consumers (Clemenson & van der Bie, 2018: 24). Businesses are moving towards sourcing raw materials that are sustainably certified as this helps define standards, provides authenticity to sustainable practice claims, and assures consumers and food regulators, this creates a good impression for consumers (Clemenson & van der Bie, 2018: 25). Sustainable sourced programmes help monitor farmers pesticide load, crop traceability, natural resource preservation and adds to community welfare projects (Clemenson & van der Bie, 2018: 25).

For businesses to be around in the future sustainable sourcing practises will need to be implemented and included in the business culture moving forward. Sustainability needs to be the integration of best agricultural practises, building relationships between farmer and business and engaging with the wider needs of farming communities.

1.2. Rationale

The importance of sustainable sourcing practises gives the business a better chance to get the right raw material at the correct time of harvest and of a high quality to produce their products (Schleicher, 2020: np). Agricultural production is largely

impacted by climatic changes and the consequences include land degradation, nutrient soil depletion, contaminated water, and biodiversity loss (Lal, Singh, Mwaseba, Kraybill, Hansen & Eik 2015: np). In Sub-Saharan Africa, poor farming practises and the combination of changing climate, has contributed to low soil fertility and low crop yields, causing a known decline in agricultural production (Ngwira, Nyirenda and Taylor, 2013: 851). This research is important and worthwhile because if agribusinesses can create sustainable farming and sourcing techniques then the planet, profit and people will take care of itself for future generations.

1.3. Problem Statement

Climate variability and change negatively affects the ability of farmers to produce crops (Makate, Makate & Mango, 2017, 1). This inability to produce crops would affect businesses that rely on key raw materials from farmers, as no raw material equals no product to sell. To cope with these challenges, farmers and businesses that rely on each other must practise sustainable farming and sourcing techniques. Practising sustainable agriculture is one way of ensuring sustainability for both businesses and farmers. The problem this research seeks to solve is what are the sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer to create a sustainable supply of key raw materials.

1.4. Research Goal

1.4.1. Research purpose statement

The purpose of this research was to explore the various sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer to secure a sustainable supply of herbs and spices for their products.

1.4.2. Research objectives

The objective of the research was to gain an in-depth understanding of the practised used by the South African food manufacturer in sourcing their herbs and spices.

1.5. Research question

In sourcing herbs and spices what are the key sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer that will ensure a consistent, high quality and sustainable supply that will not compromise future production?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptualisation

Sustainable sourcing

- Sustainable sourcing is sustaining farmers, resources, and communities by promoting farming practices and methods that are profitable, environmentally sound, and good for communities (SARE, 2015: np). An agriculture that depletes natural resources, or pollutes the environment, will limit its production. An agriculture that is not profitable will not allow its farmers to stay in business. An agriculture that fails to meet the needs of businesses and consumers, will not be sustained by society. The researcher will look at proposed solutions to profit and ecology leading to a sustainable supply of raw materials .

Contract farming

- Contract farming is an agreement between a farmer and a business to grow produce under certain terms and conditions which include price, quantity, quality, and inputs (Brewin & Smaller, 2018:). The researcher will look at the theory on contractual farming and the evidence to whether contract farming benefits the supply of raw materials for a business.

Environmental sustainability

- Environmental sustainability is the ability to allow human society to satisfy its needs without compromising future ecosystems (Morelli, 2011: 5). Environmental sustainability is measured by land, water, soil and biodiversity conservation (Pelletier, 2016: 41).

Sustainable farming techniques

- Sustainable farming is the ability of farmers to grow and reuse the land farmed on in the future. This is measured by seed handling and planting, pesticide and nutrient handling, pest, weed and disease management and management systems (Pelletier, 2016: 41).

Evaluating studies done on the effects of the above two points on yield production will give a better understanding if farmers who implement these practises help the supply of raw materials to businesses.

Agricultural value chain

- The range of activities required to create the final product is the value chain (Louw & Venter, 2017: 239). Without being able to create the final product, creating a sustainable supply of raw materials will not help the business. The value chain helps tie up all the loose ends together and producing the final product to sell. The value chain is important in the study as it brings value to both farmer and business.

2.2. Theoretical foundation

Agency Theory

A theory is used to give a perspective on events (Maree, 2020: 35). The theoretical foundation that form the basis of the research was agency theory.

In the late 1960's Wilson (1968: 119-132) and the early 1970's Arrow (1971: 134-143) started investigating how individuals or groups share risk amongst each other. This literature went on to describe the problem of risk-sharing between parties when the attitude towards risk differed. Risk-sharing literature was broadened by agency theory that included the agency problem that occurred when two parties have different objectives in mind (Eisenhardt, 1989: 58). Agency theory is specifically targeted at relationships, where party one, known as the principle, delegates work to party two, known as the agent, who completes that work (Eisenhardt, 1989: 58). This agency relation is present at times when there is a situation where one party depends on the activities of another party (Marks-Bielska and Zielinska, 2018: 83). Agency theory thus, examines the relations between parties as contract relations and provides a framework to determine the most appropriate contractual arrangement that aligns the interests of a principal and the agent who are engaged in the activity together to make sure that no hidden action and hidden information which the principal cannot see or can do so at a cost, but may still not be able to

prevent behaviour by the agent that would be considered opportunistic (Menyah, 2013). The agency theory has separated along two lines: positivist and principle-agent (Rehber, 2017: 16). Positivist research is descriptive and involves less mathematics than the principle-agent research and is mainly concerned with the objectives, policies, and guidelines of the contracts (Rehber, 2017: 16). Davis, Schoorman and Donaldson (1997: 23) positivist research is to cover shareholders' interests, minimize costs and align principle-agent interests. While the principal-agent research deals with the specific details of the contract such as employer-employee, law-client and buyer-supplier relationships to develop quantitative models to create the most optimum contract (Eisenhardt, 1989: 59). The core principle of the agency theory is to create the optimal contractual relationship between principal and agent to make sure that both parties have the same information and degrees of risk aversions. This helps to enhance the understanding of different contractual agreements and how and why they come about. In an agency relationship, the agent (in the research case the farmer) is expected to complete the task that the principals (in the research case the business) has set out with in the contract (Rehber, 2017: 17).

The South African food manufacturer relies on farmers to get their raw materials for their products and the relevance of this theory to the research is agency theory focuses on creating the optimal contract between these two parties by resolving firstly, the agency problem as said above when there is conflict in the objectives between the agent and the principle. Secondly, make known the agent's behaviour so that the principle is aware of it and that the behaviour of the agent is in line with the contract. This second point is about the risk-sharing problems that might occur if both parties have a different attitude towards risk and one party may prefer a different action due to different risk preferences. This makes agency theory a good theoretical framework for the study as the theory helps businesses gain a good understand of information systems, uncertain outcomes, incentives, and the risk of the operation (Eisenhardt, 1989: 56).

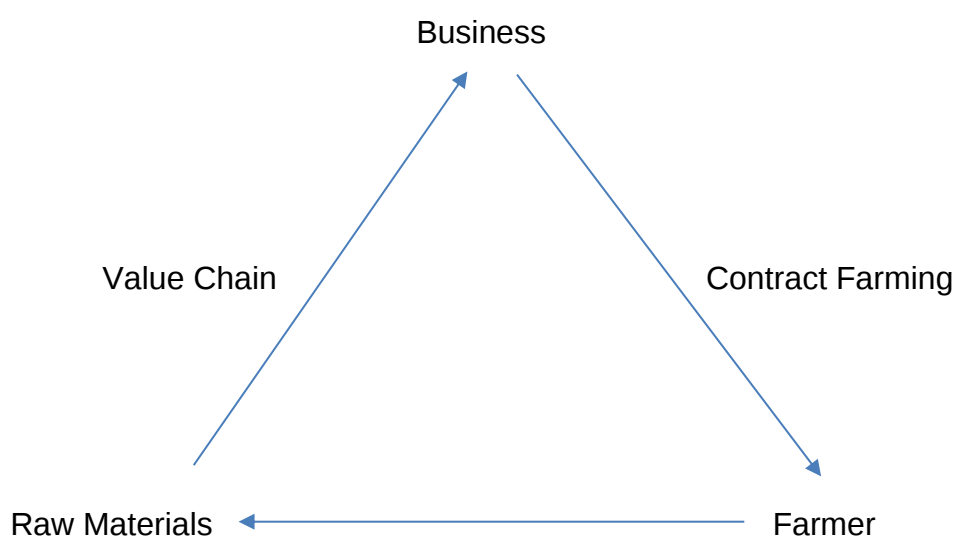
2.3. Review of past literature

Introduction

In the 21st century companies are faced with great challenges ranging from political instability to environmental pressures (Pereira, 2015: np). This is true for the South African food manufacturer, as the company faces challenges of climate change, decrease in rural farmers, volatility in agricultural markets and changing social patterns related to food. These challenges threaten their ability to have raw materials available for their products. Without these raw materials the business would not have products to sell and would face closure, therefore sustainable sourcing practises must be created to deal with these challenges. The review of past literature looks at literature on creating a sustainable supply of raw materials.

After reading different articles on the research problem, of ensuring a sustainable supply of herbs and spices, that sustainable sourcing is dependent on three areas: 1) contract farming , 2) sustainable farming practises and 3) value chain. This was backed up by the sustainable agricultural development framework in Bidzakin (2018: np) that used the combination of these three areas to create a sustainable supply of raw materials. Figure 1 below illustrates that sustainable sourcing as a combination and shows the flow of the literature review, starting with contract farming, then farming practises and ending with the business value chain.

Figure 1: Sustainable sourcing framework



Environment Sustainability & Sustainable Farming Practises

Figure 1 attempts to visually show the reader that the creation of a sustainable supply of raw materials is interdependent on these three points that will be discussed in detail below.

1) Contract farming:

An adequate definition of contractual farming is an agreement between a farmer and firm for the production and supply of agricultural products under a forward agreement at a predetermined prices, this involves both the purchaser providing support, such as supply inputs or technical support and the farmer to provide the commodity at the correct quantity and quality (Eaton & Shepherd, 2001: 2). The contracting of crops has been round for decades. Ancient Greece used the practise of crop contracting as a means of paying debt or rent, in first century China there are various forms of sharecropping agreements that has been recorded and as recently as the 19th century the United States also allowed sharecropping agreements in order to reduce rent payments to the landowners (Eaton & Shepherd, 2001: 1). However, it was not until the 20th century in European colonies where these agreements became formal between farmers and corporations.

Kohls and Uhl (1985: np) categorised contract farming into three broad sections in which each section varies according to depth and complexity:

1. *Market provision*: farmer and firm agree to terms and conditions of sales in the future and the commodity purchase.
2. *Resource provision*: the firm decides whether to supply inputs, including the seeds to be planted and/or technical advice.
3. *Management specifications*: The farmer agrees on the recommended production methods, cultivation, and harvesting guidelines.

Contract farming between agribusiness and farmers should be a partnership. For success, long-term commitment is required from both parties. Any exploitation from firms towards farmers will likely lead to failure for agribusiness investments. Farmers

also need to consider the long-term benefit of honouring contractual arrangements. The relevance of this theory is because contract farming is becoming crucial in agribusiness, whether products are purchased by multinationals, smaller companies, government agencies, farmer cooperatives or individual entrepreneurs. The relevance of this theory to the study becomes increasingly clear below when going through the advantages.

The benefits derived from contract farming extend to both farmer and firm and this is the relevance of the theory to the study. The main advantages of contractual farming for farmers are (Eaton & Shepherd, 2001: 10):

1. *Provision of inputs*: Firms may offer support in the contractual arrangements by supplying basic inputs such as seeds and fertilizer and may also provide land preparation, field cultivation and harvesting as well as free training and extension. Firms do this to ensure that proper farming techniques are followed to achieve projected yields and qualities.
2. *Fixed pricing structures*: Firms indicate the price to be paid in advance within the agreement, this protects farmers from the prevailing market prices that might fluctuate and gives the farmer the ability to negotiate prices.

The main advantages for firms are (Eaton & Shepherd, 2001: 18):

1. *Production reliability*: The biggest advantage of contract farming for firms is that it offers a constant and reliable supply of raw materials however, failure to supply agreed contracts could seriously jeopardize future sales.
2. *Consistent quality*: Contract farming makes supervision, control, and maintenance of crop quality easier. To achieve high crop quality, crops often must be transplanted, harvested, and purchased in a constant manner. Quarantine control of crops is easier to manage under contract farming since quarantine authorities only have to inspect a limited number of exporters of a single commodity, who closely supervise farmers, than to inspect hundreds if not thousands, of individual producers selling through open markets.

The increase in privatisation and liberalisation in developed countries has helped to bridge the gap between private companies and farmers in European countries. The outcome from this has caused contract farming to become a catalyst for the

transformation in agriculture bringing together multinational companies and farmers in developing countries (Eaton & Shepherd, 2001: 47). The start of formal contract farming in countries was a suggested method to help grow their agriculture industry as it would facilitate in the transfer of technology, modernisation of farms, price incentives, and ultimately create sustainable farmers. Contract farming is said to hold great potential for the development and uplift in rural areas if integrated nationally (Rehber, 2007: 49). The spread of contracts and the many varieties of contract farming throughout Africa and Asia, has indicated that contract farming has brought a significant capital development in agriculture (Rehber, 2007: 50).

The structure of contract farming may vary depending on the crop, objectives and resources of the business and the farmers ability. The primary decision to contract farm is to better ensure an adequate supply of raw materials within a defined period and at a defined price. In theory any crop or livestock product can be contracted out although, certain products favour specific approaches. The decisions of what the contract entails must be made based on market demand, production and processing obligations and the economic and social viability of the farmer (Eaton & Shepherd, 2001: 46).

The centralised model of contract farming:

The centralised model is a type of contract where the business approaches the farmers to either grow or purchase certain crops to use in the sale of their product (Eaton & Shepherd, 2001: 47). The business may purchase from many small-scale farmers or one larger scale farmer within a single project. This model in Africa is commonly used as crops are contracted out to farmers under these centralised structures. The centralised model works well for most commodities such as tobacco, cotton, sugar cane, bananas, coffee, tea, cocoa, and rubber. However, this model is not limited to poultry, pork, and dairy production. If vegetables and fruit are grown, contracts could include the sorting, storage, and packaging of the product for the business. An example used by Eaton and Sheperd (2001: 48) is multinational corporation Lonhro, who had success in using this model for the growing of cotton in Zambia in the 1980's. In this contract Lonhro used over 15 000 farmers to grow cotton under contract for the company. The advantage of this was Lonhro had a constant supply of raw materials and the farmers knew they would have guaranteed

sales of their cotton. The business can choose the level to which it gets involved with the farmer in production. This can vary from minimum involvement as providing the seeds to be planted or to the extreme where the business provides land preparation, technology, seeds, agrochemicals and help in harvesting the crop (Eaton & Shepherd, 2001: 48).

Does contract farming help in creating a sustainable supply of raw materials?

A study done in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi based on farmers experience with contract farming, came to show in most cases the farmers performance ability to provide raw materials increased, this caused an increase in income despite the rise in management costs (Rehber, 2007: 51). A study in Zimbabwe on the experiences of contract farming indicates contract farming as the motivating force of farmers to produce non-traditional vegetables under contract for export (Masakure & Henson 2005). The factors for farmers in Zimbabwe to accept contracts were found to be a decrease in uncertainties, cash benefits, and contracts provided a sense of prestige and self-satisfaction, although motivations change under different conditions and contracts (Masakure & Henson, 2005: 1721-1733). Eswatini uses contract farming as a strategy for rural development in their Fourth National Development Plan due to the successful development of Vuvulane Irrigated Farms (Levin, 1988: 101-120)

Access to capital and credit is made easier and more assessable through contract farming (Hudson, 2000). Jari and Fraser (2009: 1129-1137) argued the need for contract farming will result in a reduction in poverty for smallholder farmers due to the efficient allocation of resources of goods and services. Studies done by as Bolwig, Gibbon, and Jones (2009: 1094-1104) and Bellemare (2012: 1418-1434) showed that the positive effects of contract farming in Africa has increases in income, production, and the livelihood of the farmers. Contract farming is argued to help share the risk between the farmer and the business causing a reduction in price and income volatility (Key & Runsten, 1999: 381-401). The same study done by Bellemare (2012: 1418) showed that contract farming decreases market imperfections through the provision credit, farming inputs and technology and improved information of both parties, leading to a decrease in transaction costs. A study done on contract farming of rice in Ghana by showed that there is a positive

correlation between contract farming and increases in yield and concluded that those farmers who used contracts saw significant increases in yields and gross margins along with the potential to increase yield and gross margins in the future against farmers who did not use contract farming (Bidzakin, 2018: np).

However, contract farming is not without its limits. Contract farming can be used as a tool to cheat farmers as showed by Porter and Phillips-Howard (1997: 227-238) and Singh (2002: 1621-1638). A study on contract farming in the Upper West region of Ghana showed that although technology and productivity increased, profits did not due to high production costs relative to non-contract farmers (Bidzakin, 2018). Participation in contract farming does not always improve income of smallholder farmers' even though there were increases in production of soybean in Ghana. Although contract farming has limits, it does not seem to compromise production (Abdulai and Al-hassan, 2016: np).

Despite the limitation's, companies still value contract farming. Griffith Foods is an American based food company specialising in food ingredients and in a presentation done on their sustainability mission they noted sustainable farming and sustainable sourcing of raw material as their number one goal (Menon, 2018: np). The creation of sustainable certified raw materials assures consumers and food regulators that products were produced using environmentally and socially responsible practices leading to an increase in sales and customer loyalty for the business (Menon, 2018: np). Griffith Foods has a philosophy that partnerships are needed to create an impact, therefore the combination of Griffith's skill and abilities along with the unique skills and abilities of the farmer will help create solutions to sustainable sourcing (Menon, 2018: np). An example of this is the partnership between Griffith and Indian farmers in sourcing Coriander (Menon, 2018: np). Griffith Food approached 800 small farmers and helped improve harvest handling practices, processing, cleaning, and food safety. Then purchased the coriander from these farmers. This creation of this partnership for Griffith Foods has led to a better sustainable source of coriander for their products.

Contract farming has shown that it can benefit farmers directly through access to credit, farming inputs, new markets, and technology, causing an increasing in productivity and income (Hudson, 2000: np). The example of Griffith Foods, along

with the other cases mentioned above, seems to back up this claim that contract farming leads to a better supply of raw materials.

2) Environmental and farming sustainability:

The second factor that influences sustainable sourcing is the way in which farming takes place. If farming practises are unsustainable then sustainable sourcing cannot be achieved. In 2002 The Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) Platform was created by Nestle, Unilever and Danone to be able to share knowledge and best practises for sustainable agriculture at a precompetitive level because these companies realised that for sustainable sourcing to occur sustainable agriculture needs to take place too (Pelletier, 2016: 22). SAI goes on to define sustainable agriculture as “the efficient production of safe, high quality agricultural products, in a way that protects and improves the natural environment, the social and economic conditions of farmers, their employees and local communities, and safeguards the health and welfare of all farmed species.” The SAI Platform is important as it promotes the development and implementation of sustainable agriculture by developing tools and guidance to help better sustainable sourcing (Pelletier, 2016: 22).

An example of one of these tools is the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA). The FSA is a checklist of 112 questions that cover social, environmental, and economic topics (Pelletier, 2016: 22). The SAI Platform uses this assessment to help support farmers and companies transition towards a sustainable production of agriculture.

There are three steps in the FSA process:

1. Engage: the farm management group should be aware of the FSA sustainability requirements
2. Assess: the agricultural practices of the supply base are assessed
3. Improve: the focus is on continuous improvement, working towards better agricultural practices.

Griffith Foods, discussed under contract farming, also added sustainable farming practises as an important element in their sustainability sourcing report (Menon, 2018: np). These elements of sustainable farming include:

- Safeguarding natural resources like lakes and river, trees, and un-utilized land
- Biocontrol of pests and diseases
- Soil conservation and water control
- Farm waste management
- Wildlife conservation

Griffith Foods partnered with farmers in Asia and helped in sharing knowledge on better farming practises and taught these farmers how to implement these sustainable practises (Menon, 2018: np). For example, reducing the pesticide load by using sticky pads and pheromone traps. Griffith Foods also helped these farmers become Rain Forest Alliance Certified, which means that the farmer has met the requirements to classify their farming techniques as sustainable. The advantage of this means that future purchases of red peppers from these farmers are known to be done sustainably, therefore Griffith Foods has a sustainable supply of raw materials.

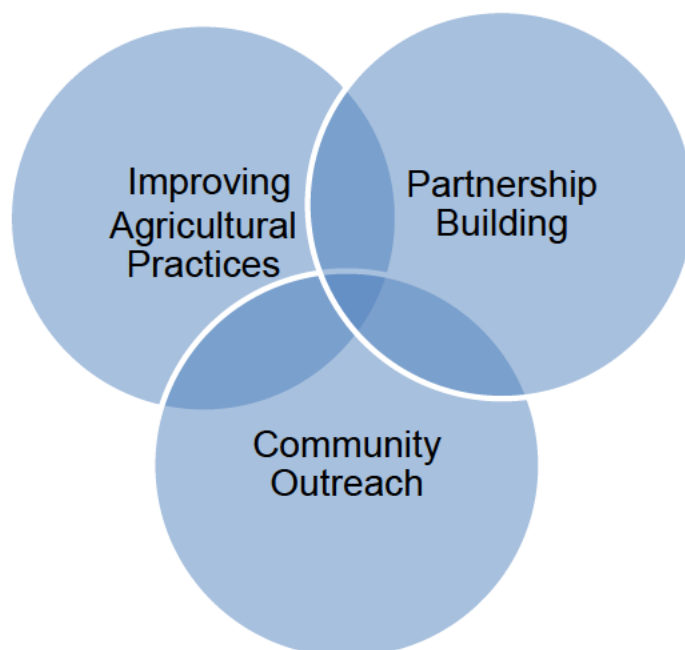
In a study on reducing poverty by increasing sustainable agriculture in developing countries by Pretty, Morison and Hine (2002: 217-234) discovered that food production improved under four different mechanism, two of these mechanisms related directly to the environment. The first of these two mechanisms found that production increases when natural resources (water and land) are used more efficiently to increase total farm production. Creating new water sources and implementing irrigation planning and land restoration through rehabilitation practises led to an increase in the ability to produce more crops especially in dryland areas where the supply of additional water for irrigated crops allowed more crops to be grown. The second mechanism was the improvement in per hectare yields of crops by introducing new elements into the farming, such as new crop varieties and animal breeds most appropriate for the local region, simple fruits that are easy to farm, soil health improvement and fertility and pest and weed management with little or no pesticides used. Within the study it was found that 31% of farmers increased their ability to plant more crops through better water and land practises (Pretty, Morison & Hine, 2002: np).

The second mechanism was the most popular to implement and the study analysed these farms and found that the investment in this sustainable agricultural technique led to an increase of 93% in per a hectare food production over all projects (Pretty,

Morison & Hine, 2002: np). The study calculated the marginal increase in food production per a household when farms adopted sustainable practices and technologies and found an increase in the average annual food production per a household by 73% for farms that grew cereals, 150% for farms that grew roots like potatoes or cassava and 46% for four large farms in southern Latin America.

The study did acknowledge the findings on agricultural sustainability sound too good to be true. However, stated prevailing views are gradually changing and sceptics are starting to recognise the value of sustainable farming practises even from developing countries.

Clemenson and van der Bie (2018: 24) did a presentation for Nedspice, a privately owned collection of companies involved in the processing of spices, on the key challenges facing the spice world and how to create a sustainable spice future. The solution put forward by Nedspice to achieve spice sustainability is the Nedspice Farmers Partnership Programme (NFPP). Figure 2 shows the programme:



- Nedspice will help improve agricultural practices by farmers. Nedspice currently applies both the Sustainable Agriculture Network and Sustainable Agriculture Code standards. These standards ensure farmers look after their land, soil and water and pesticide management.

- Partnership building is designed to bring businesses and farmers together to form contracts. The meetings are to sharing production, market, price and quality information between the two.
- Nedspice's Community Outreach activities are aimed at the wider needs of farming communities. Such as technology and production investments.

NFPP has been implemented in Vietnam and India for peppers, cumin, and turmeric.

Although sustainable farming is not without its limits. Many farms are 'certified' however, there are several problems as these certifications are complex and cover many issues that farmers cannot attain. Certification is also expensive and has limited effectiveness when dealing with problems, such as child labour, poverty, sexual harassment and sanitation (Freitas, 2017: np).

3) Value chain:

The value chain created by Porter describes the chain of activities which helps add value to a product that an organisation engages in (Louw & Venter, 2017: 239). Two categories of activities were identified by Porter: primary and secondary activities (Louw & Venter, 2017: 240-241).

Primary activities include:

- Inbound logistics: receiving, distributing, and storing products.
- Operations: using inputs to create the final product.
- Marketing and sales: advertising, sales activities, and distribution channels.

Secondary activities include:

- Procurement: acquiring resources as inputs for products.
- HR management: recruit, manage and train employees.
- Technological and infrastructure development: developing new products, financial systems, or quality control management.

The value chain can bring greater income, generates opportunities, stable income, new skills and persuades people to stay in rural areas to farm (Chapota, 2013: 5)

Conclusion:

The literature above clarifies what contributes to sustainable sourcing. In the introduction the researcher laid out an argument that for sustainable sourcing to occur a combination of contract farming, sustainable farming and having a value chain is needed. From the following articles it is shown that contract farming increases access to capital, credit and farming inputs thus increasing the farmers ability to produce crops (Bellemare, 2012: np). This was seen in Zimbabwe to Ghana. Businesses that offered contracts were also concerned with sustainable farming practises. This can be seen with Griffith Foods and Nedspice Group who helped farmers practises better land, water, soil, and pesticide management. These practises increased farming production and crop yield (Pretty, Morison & Hine, 2002: 217-234). Finally, a strong value chain helps add value to farmers and the business (Chapota, 2013: 5). The value chain helps a business create a valuable product to sell. Sustainable sourcing needs all three to work together, when this happens businesses can be sure they have a sustainable supply of raw materials.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Interpretivism

The paradigm of the research was interpretivism. Interpretivism views social reality as an ever changing phenomena and is dependent on the way an individual interprets reality internally (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2016: 30). Interpretivists aim to gain an in-depth understanding of the realities around them and thus, depend on qualitative research (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2016: 30). Qualitative research places importance on words rather than numbers during the collection and analysis of the data and since the aim is to study reality subjectively using methods, such as focus groups, in-depth interviews and more, that fit the context to help give an in-depth understanding of the phenomena (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2016: 30).

Therefore, this research paradigm is relevant to the research study since the study is to gain an understanding into the sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer to source their herbs and spices and is not concerned with finding relationships between two objects.

3.2. Conceptual Approach and Design

3.2.1. Conceptual Approach

Descriptive qualitative

The research takes a descriptive qualitative approach (Nieuwenhuis, 2020: 60). A descriptive qualitative approach seeks gain knowledge and describe either a group of people, phenomena, or other object in order to find the answer to “what” questions (Nieuwenhuis, 2020: 60). The purpose of a descriptive approach is to describe the characteristics of a phenomena as accurately as possible (Nieuwenhuis, 2020: 60).

This approach was appropriate to study since the aim is to find out *what* are the sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer to secure herbs and

spices as accurately as possible by gathering data that describes the events and describes the data collected.

3.2.2. Conceptual Design

Descriptive case-study research

Case-study research is based on an observed and measured phenomenon where knowledge is derived from (Nieuwenhuis, 2020: 89). In the context of this research study, the case- study was the business and that business is the South African food manufacturer.

Time dimension: Cross- sectional

A cross-sectional design is helpful to create an overall image of what is studied at one point in time (du Plooy-Cilliers & Cronje, 2016: 149) and will be used in the following research . The data was collected once and was used in the research study. The survey design is cost and time effective. The researcher gathered the data on the research question using an interview.

Deductive reasoning

Deductive theorising is taking a general assumption and reasoning to a more specific assumption, such as taking board aspects of a theory and applying them to a specific topic (Bezuidenhout, 2016: 48). The research study following a deductive line of reasoning. The research proposal began with finding literature and theories on different sourcing practises. Agency theory (Rehber, 2017: 16-17) is the main theory used in the study that gives an overview of the theory behind contracts between farmers and businesses. The theory moves from the general to the specific therefore, deductive line of theorising is best used for this study.

3.3. Research Plan

3.3.1. Population

Wiid and Diggines (2013: 186) defined the population as the total of people or the social artefacts that information is required from. The research question asks: 'what are the sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer in securing herbs and spices?'. Therefore, for the following study, the population are the people who are employees at the company. To be more specific, the population parameter needs to be created and this parameter is made up of the common characteristics and the amount of people or social artefacts within the population which includes the nature, size and similar characteristics of the population (Pascoe, 2016: 133) For the following study the population parameters will be:

- The nature of the population: The employees at the company who work in the procurement department that research, evaluate and acquire the products to be used in their operations.
- The size of population: The number of individuals who explicitly make up the procurement and regulatory team who are specialists in the sourcing practises of herbs and spices of the company.
- The unique characteristics: Employees at the company who are directly involved in the sourcing of the herbs and spices and who create and understand the practises. Other characteristics involve working in supply chain management, understanding key suppliers and the business environment.

Since the population parameters have been set and the population was defined appropriately, the target population and the accessible population need to be distinguished. The target population is known as everyone who falls within the population parameters within the study and the accessible population are those individuals that are actually used within the study (Pascoe, 2016: 133). Thus, the target population was the employees at the South African food manufacturer who are involved in the sourcing practises of herbs and spices. Whereas the accessible

population are those employees who fall in the population parameter and are used in the study.

3.3.2. Sampling

Unit of analysis: People

The unit of analysis in research is defined as elements that need to be investigated to gather data for a research study (Pascoe, 2016: 134). These elements consist of people or social artefacts.

For this research proposal the unit of analysis will be people. More specifically the employees at the South African food manufacturer who were involved in the sourcing practises of herbs and spices.

Non-probability Sampling

Non-probability sampling is used when gaining access to the entire population is impractical or the findings of the study need not be generalised to the population at large, specifically qualitative studies (Pascoe, 2016: 137). Thus, since the research study was qualitative and does not need to be generalised, non-probability sampling was used in determining the population and the non-probability method used was purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling method

Purposive sampling is done when the elements that are included in the sample are purposively chosen according to a set list of characteristics (Pascoe, 2016: 142-143). The motivation for purposive sampling was that the researcher can ensure that each element chosen was helpful in the research as each element will fit the population parameters of the study. These characteristics includes working for the South African food manufacturer, working in with the procurement department and understanding the sourcing practises. Looking at the population and the research question and having found the characteristics that are important to the study the researcher can

now select the sample. The population of the study is employees. To narrow the focus, the researcher will select employees who work in the procurement department that fulfil the set list of characteristics. This method helped in answering the research question of the study.

Sample size

The original sample size of the study was meant to be two, however the researcher could only get one participant from the South African food manufacturer. The sample size of the research proposal was one unit. Due to constraints outside the researcher's hands, the accessible population is small.

However, the sample size of one unit consists of an adequate number of the population from which to attain the relevant information and data required to gain an understanding of the sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer. This sample size was a representative of the total population and fall within the population parameters. The results will be used to develop an in-depth understanding of sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer in securing herbs and spices for their products.

3.4. Data collection method

In-depth interviews

The following data collection for this research proposal was qualitative in nature thus, the goal was to explore, understand and describe not measure or quantify (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2016: 30).

The research study used was in-depth interviews as its qualitative data collection method. This method allowed the researcher to pose questions to participant that aim to help learn more about a specific phenomenon in more detail (Bezuidenhout & Strydom, 2016: 188). Interviews are valuable in gathering information that will allow the researcher to interpret and understand the interviewee's answers to specific questions. Points can be substantiated if needed and the researcher is able to ask more questions if needed. The interview followed a general interview approach (Bezuidenhout & Strydom, 2016: 188) that follows a conversational approach but has

predetermined questions with a great degree of freedom given to the interviewee. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, face to face interviews were not to be considered, therefore the interview was online and took place via the online platform of Zoom.

The reason for in-depth interviews as the data collection method for this research proposal was that the researcher needs to speak with an employee, who works on the procurement of the herbs and apices, to find out the sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer and an interview was the best way to get the information needed to answer the research question. This approach allowed the interviewee to answer the set questions proposed in-depth and gives the interviewer the ability to adjust the focus of the interview. The questions asked during the interview were open-ended questions. Open-ended questions allowed the interviewee to give a varied response. The questions asked during the interview are the instruments.

How the online interview was be conducted:

First contact of the person to be interviewed:

- Explain the purpose of the interview: who you are, why you want to talk to them, and what you wish to find out.
- Set time and date to meet on Zoom.
- Address terms of confidentiality: Get a consent form signed.
- Explain the format of the interview: A general interview approach where predetermined questions are to be asked on Zoom.
- Indicate length of interview: 60 minutes long.
- Leave contact information.
- Allow the interviewee to ask questions before starting the interview.
- Ask for permission to record the interview and take notes.

Conducting Interview:

- Ask one question at a time.
- Attempt to remain neutral. No reaction to answers.
- Encourage responses with occasional head nods.
- Stay calm and collected.
- Provide transition between major topics.
- Do not stray from topic, take longer than needed to answer a question, or allow questions to be asked to the interviewer.

After Interview:

- Check the recording of the interview.
- Thank the interviewee.

3.5. Data analysis method

Qualitative content analysis

A data analysis method is how the researcher will understand, interpret, and present the data after collection. For the research study, a qualitative content analysis was used when analysing the data. Qualitative content analysis is used to explore and identify themes and patterns that are found throughout a text (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2016: 234). A qualitative content analysis takes key themes and sheds light to the meaning of the phenomenon rather than the statistical significance. Qualitative content analysis will be conducted using a deductive approach, meaning that the researcher uses the theoretical framework identified in the study (agency theory) to identify specific codes within the text which are grouped in themes.

Qualitative content analysis makes use of coding to break down data into meaningful groups or categories (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2016: 235). The coding used in this qualitative content analysis is open coding as this allows the researcher to read the entire text to understand and gain an overall impression of the text (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2016: 235).

In the research proposal the researcher used a qualitative in-depth interview to gather information for the proposal. A qualitative content analysis is the best technique to understand the data from the employees from the South African food manufacturer and qualitative content analysis allows the researcher to separate the information gathered into themes. The objective of the research study is to find out what are the sustainable sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer in securing herbs and spices for their products and following the process of qualitative content analysis, the researcher can develop categories from the interviewees and draw accurate conclusions from the coded data.

The researcher had used eight steps in processing the qualitative content analysis, namely (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2016: 235):

1. Preparing the data: The data collected was organized and then transcribed, with the research question and objectives as a guideline.
2. Define coding unit or unit of analysis: The unit of analysis refers to the basic unit of text that is to be analysed. The unit of analysis maybe a word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph.
3. Develop categories and a coding scheme: The researcher then deductively developed a conceptual framework from the data gained from the questions within the in-depth interview.
4. Test coding scheme on a sample of text: The coding scheme needs to be tested for clarity and consistency of the coding definitions. The testing could be done on a sample of the data available to the researcher and any problems related to the coding categories will be resolved.
5. Code all the text: Once the coding consistency had been reached, the data can be coded according to the coding rules. Coding the data allows for the researcher to take note of relevant and meaningful sections of data that are relevant to the research study and question. The researcher had used open coding to interpret the data that was collected from the in-depth interview.
6. Assess coding consistency: once coding was completed, recheck the consistency of coding.
7. Draw conclusions from coded data: Interpreting the themes or categories that had been identified by uncovering patterns, exploring properties and

dimensions of categories. The researcher had drawn conclusions that are in line with answering the research question.

8. Report methods and findings: The researcher reported on the processes and procedures used with utmost truth. Qualitative content analysis puts forward the interpretative findings that can be backed by interviews. The finding was interpreted by the researcher who was able to present the finding.

4. Presentation of Findings

4.1. Findings

The interview was conducted using open-ended questions and underwent a thematic analysis. From this the main themes were found and analysed. The data was obtained from an interview with an employee of the South African food manufacturer who would deal with the company's procurement department and to ensure confidentiality the names of the participant was not mentioned within the research. The following data collected from the interview is broken into three themes, each representing a different period: past, present, and future. The researcher did this to illustrate what the business has done in addressing the sourcing practises over the years and moving forward into the future.

Theme 1: Past

In the late 1990's and early 2000's the relationship between farmers in the Southern Cape and the South African food manufacturer started to collapse as farmers would only plant crops that the market demanded, leaving out the specific raw material they needed for their products. This led to volatility in the prices for agricultural products as demand would increase causing prices to rise making it more expensive for businesses or demand would fall causing prices to fall affecting farmers. This dilemma shifted the sourcing practises by the South African food manufacturer from big South African commercial farmers who are led by market demand to smallholder farmers. This change in sourcing practise allowed the South African food manufacturer to purchase chili's and peppers from Indian, paprika from China and sage from Albania. However, over the past decade Indian and China have a long history of using fertilisers and pesticides and much of the soil is now contaminated, compromising the safety and Organic Certification standard of the produce. Due to this a new strategy was needed and this opened the door to implement a sustainable sourcing programme.

Theme 2: Present

Instead of sourcing different produce from overseas countries the South African food manufacturer turned to Africa. From this the BBBEE Enterprise Development Farmers Project model was created to ensure sustainability in African farming

products. The model helps assist South African farmers and rural enterprises to enhance regional economic growth along five service components:

- Conducting applied research and transfer appropriate production and post-harvest technology to producers, processors, and exporters.
- Building technical and business capacities of farmers to enhance productivity and increase profits.
- Developing good quality assurance and quality control systems to enable producers meet market requirements.
- Provide market information and create market linkages among value chains members.
- Support policy dialogue and formulation.

Each project below focuses on South African farmers with the intent to enhance the farmers capabilities to supply produce to the South African food manufacturer.

Project: Coriander

The South African food manufacturer has partnered with a farmer who set up a trust with his workers. The trust is 51% owned by the workers and 49% owned by the farmer. The trust supplies the coriander and the profit from the coriander is split in a ratio of 51% to the workers and 49% to the farmer.

Since 2019 the trust has expanded on research and development of a better, unique variety of coriander to grow in the area revitalising the current genetic stock.

Other smallholder farmers are continuously being brought under mentorship of the trust to grow Coriander providing further streams of sourcing for the South African food manufacturer.

Project: Bell Peppers

The South African food manufacturer had approached smallholder farmers around South Africa to teach, mentor and transfer technology to grow Bell Peppers. The first grade of Bell Peppers gets sold in the open market. Then the 2nd and 3rd grade peppers that are low in value are purchased by the South African food manufacturer to be diced and dried.

A commercial farmer in the Robertson grows 300tons of peppers annually and 30tons of 3rd grade Bell Peppers goes to waste. The waste can be reused and 30tons of food waste is saved, bought at a low price, and used by the South African food manufacturer.

Through partnering with a commercial farmer, the smallholder farmers get help in selling the 1st grade peppers on the open market. These smallholder farmers benefit from the supplier contract with the South African food manufacturer for the supply of dried bell peppers.

Other home-grown projects that the South African food manufacturer is doing research on includes Birds Eye Chilli, Paprika and Turmeric.

Rainforest Alliance Certification

The South African food manufacturer sources raw produce from farmers who are Rainforest Alliance Certified. The Rainforest Alliance certification provides a credible link between responsible production and consumption of agriculture products, enabling consumers and businesses to make purchasing decisions that benefit people and the environment as well as providing ongoing business value.

Theme 3: Future

Project: Origanum

Agricultural data on the climatic conditions in the Oudtshoorn area show that it is suitable for growing and drying of Origanum. A farmer in this area, that has experience in growing herbs, along with a tobacco, has a drying shed on his farm that can be converted to dry Origanum. This partnership has the potential to supply a significant amount of Origanum to the herbs and spice company.

Trials were meant to be conducted in February 2019 to prove viability and sustainability for small holder farmer to grow and dry Origanum however trails were moved to 2020 and with COVID-19 the trails have been further delayed to 2021.

Project: Rosemary

In the Dysselsdorp area, The Department of Agriculture has a farm that produced essential oils and has a designated area to grow rosemary. This rosemary had been

grown under organic farming conditions and the possibility exists to get the rosemary certified organic. If an unemployment rate of 80% in the area, The Department for Agriculture and the local Municipality are trying to create jobs. The planting, growing, harvesting, and drying will provide another sourcing opportunity of rosemary and will also create jobs for the local community.

Looking outside South Africa; project: Rwanda Chilli

There is a growing market for Certified Organic produce worldwide and, as said above, in Indian and China many of the chilli produce is not considered organic due to soil contamination, making the next best region to grow chilli's is in Africa. Mainly due to economic reasons African farmers have never been exposed to fertilizers and pesticides making Rwanda a good place to start organic farming.

The programme Supporting Indian Trade in Africa helps supply seeds, training and ensures crop buyback for farmers in Rwanda to grow organic chillies. The results from the programme are expected to increase investment, knowledge, and technology transfer from India to East Africa. The South African food manufacturer are currently looking to see if this programme has the potential to be a sustainable sourcing method of chillies.

African herbs and spices

African has many indigenous Herbs, Spices and Vegetables that have been used as traditional medicines for centuries. As modern medicine has advanced so too has the understand of the value the herbs, spices, and vegetables. The South African food manufacturer is looking at investigating the possibility and potential of adding indigenous herbs and spices to their products.

Food loss commercialisation

According to the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations each year, one-third of all food produced for human consumption is wasted globally (FAO, 2018: 4).

The South African food manufacturer is currently looking at converting food related waste into reusable produce. The first project is looking at spend grain. Breweries

discard or sell the fermented grain used to make beer at an exceptionally low value. The discarded grain has the potential to be converted into reusable produce.

The second project is Green Banana Flour. Every year banana waste is generated in large amounts (Kamal, 2015: 1). Much of the banana that is wasted can be used as low-cost ingredients in food products (Kamal, 2015: 1). The green bananas waste can be made into flour which can be used as a thickening agent.

4.2. Interpretation of findings

The South African food manufacturer relies on raw produce from farmers to use in their products. The problem surrounding this study is that of ensuring a continuous supply of key raw materials used in production from farmers. Due to the reliance on farmers, the projects are underpinned by agency theory, the theoretical foundation of this research, which is specifically targeted at relationships, where party one (the company) , known as the principle, delegates work to party two, known as the agent (farmer), who completes that work (Eisenhardt, 1989: 58). Agency theory provides a framework to determine the most appropriate contractual arrangement that aligns the interests of a principal and the agent in way to benefit both parties (Menyah, 2013: np). The BBBEE Enterprise Development Farmers Project model is directly aimed at solving this problem as farming sustainability relies on looking after the environment and the farmers, while creating jobs and uplifting the community around farms (Pelletier, 2016: 22). The project shows that the South African food manufacturer understands that to be sustainable in the future farming needs to be sustainable.

At the core of the model is to teach and mentor farmers in sustainable farming and create regional economic growth within the area. Through teaching and mentoring farmers in sustainable farming this enhances the future security of the raw produce that the South African food manufacturer rely on. This model is similar to the sustainable agricultural development framework in Bidzakin (2018: 3) that combined business-farmer relationship, environmental practises and sustainable farming practises to create a sustainable supply of raw materials. The bell pepper project perfectly displays business-farmer relationship through teaching and mentoring, environmental practises through the transfer of technological practises and sustainable practises through reusing the waste from the farmer. There are a few

common denominators that run through each project. Firstly, a partnership between the South African food manufacturer and the farmers are formed, where both party needs are considered. Examples of this is seen in the coriander project where both farmer and workers benefit and the bell pepper project where smallholder farmers are taught and provided support. Secondly, acquiring raw produce through reusing waste, farmers that practise sustainable farming practises or teaching and mentoring smallholder farmers in sustainable farming. Examples of this is seen again by the bell peppers project of reusing the 30tons of waste from farmers, investing in ways to reuse spend grain and green banana waste and purchasing raw produce from farmers who are Rainforest Alliance Certified.

The projects created are aligned with the Nedspice sustainable spice future framework called Nedspice Farmers Partnership Programme (NFPP) (Clemenson & van der Bie, 2018: 24). The framework states that the sustainability of spice relies on improving farming practises, partnership building and community outreach.

4.2.1. Conclusion

The implications of the various sourcing techniques created add more knowledge to the body of sustainable agriculture worldwide. However, the BBEEE Enterprise Development Farmers Project goes beyond just securing raw materials to use as ingredients in the products. This project is centred around the upliftment of rural communities through the transfer of technology and knowledge to farmers. Teaching them to become profitable, sustainable, and self-efficient. Simultaneously, the project helps stabilise the purchase prices of the various raw materials. The quality of the produce from farmers is better and finally, dealing directly with farmers allow the herb and spice company better traceability of the product from farm to business.

4.3. Trust worthiness of findings

Qualitative research does not rely on numbers as evidence and due to this, qualitative studies rely on trustworthiness (Koonin, 2016: 258). The point of this study is to gain an understanding of a phenomena and the results are not generalised to a broader population and therefore, trustworthiness is the measure of

validity and reliability in the following study. Trustworthiness comprises of (Koonin, 2016: 258-259):

Credibility: Credibility depends on the accuracy of the interpretation of the data by the researcher of (Koonin, 2016: 258). The researcher ensured credibility by carefully analysing the data received from the interviews to produce accurate results of the sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer. The In-depth interview helped to collect data from the company in a more detailed and meticulous manner for the study, the clear and in-depth results obtained during the interview to answer the research question was able to ensure credibility.

Transferability: Transferability is when findings of the research are applied to similar situations and causes similar outcomes of (Koonin, 2016: 258). This allows for the generalisation of the study even though the aim is not to generalise findings. If the sourcing practises created by the South African food manufacturer are successful in one area and then duplicated in another with similar results this would increase the transferability meaning the results and analysis can be applied beyond the research study. The researcher ensured that the findings reflect the information provided by the participant and not that of the researcher. Furthermore, this study will be made available for other to access. Therefore, if it is applied in the correct manner it should make it transferable.

Dependability: The data collection, analysis and outcome process must be highly integrated to be dependable of (Koonin, 2016: 259). The researcher ensured dependability by carefully and methodically being present during the process while interviewing and collecting the data. Furthermore, being as precise as possible by analysing the data carefully to provide accurate results. The use of in-depth interviews will ensure a high quality of data collection. A qualitative data analysis allows the researcher to interpret the data accordingly and generate accurate results from the data, thus increasing dependability. From this the researcher was able to remain as objective and unbiased as possible.

Confirmability: Confirmability is described as the extent of neutrality of the study and states that the findings should be represent that of the participants and not be influenced by the researcher's bias or motivation (Koonin, 2016: 259). The interpretation and findings of the researcher must be aligned with the data collected.

Other people who immitate the research should be led to the same findings as the researcher. Confirmability was ensured by avoiding biasness and refraining from leading the participant towards desired responses.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Review of findings

The focus point of this study aimed to explore the various sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer to secure a sustainable supply of herbs and spices for their products. The conclusion resulting from the following research conducted and analysed found that the South African food manufacturer has got various sourcing practises across South Africa and in Rwanda. With the increasing uncertainty of climate change, lower yearly yields of crops and higher costs has caused a shift the South African food manufacturer towards creating more sustainable sourcing practises.

The researcher set out to gain an in-depth understanding of the various sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer and from the data analysis it is evident that there are multiple sourcing practises in order to ensure a sustainable supply of the herbs and spices to use in production.

Thus, the following research objective to explore the various sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer to secure a sustainable supply of herbs and spices for their products was achieved. The various solutions to creating a sustainable supply of herbs and spices and why there is a need to create the sustainable sourcing practises was also discovered during the interview with the participant. From this it is clear the research question was answered thoroughly. The South African food manufacturer developed the BBBEE Enterprise Development Farmers Project the intent to enhance South African farmers capabilities to supply the herbs and spices needed for the company. For the critical herbs and spices such as coriander, bell peppers, and chilli the South African food manufacturer has created projects that will ensure a sustainable supply for the future.

In addressing the research objective and question the following answers are provided:

As of the present day the South African food manufacturer has created the BBBEE Enterprise Development Farmers Project model. The basis of this project model is to

help assist South African farmers and rural enterprises supply the key herbs and spices need by the company. The South African food manufacturer hopes to achieve this through transferring the appropriate technologies that will build more technical and business capacities to enhance productivity and increase profits. The project seeks to develop good quality assurance and quality control systems to enable producers meet market requirements while providing the farmers with the correct market information.

To address the other key herbs and spices used in production the South African food manufacturer has individually created projects to achieve a sustainably supply of these key ingredients.

Project coriander was set up in partnership with a farmer who has taught his workers how to manage and sell the coriander, from the sales the workers of the trust get 51% of the profit. This allows the workers to gain important farming and business skills while getting more money. Project bell pepper was aimed to approached smallholder farmers around South Africa to teach, mentor and transfer technology to grow Bell Peppers. This would supply the South African food manufacturer with sustainably supply bell peppers. To ensure that the herbs and spices are sustainability sourced and that the farming practises are sustainable, the South African food manufacturer makes sure that each farmer is Rainforest Alliance Certified as this certification provides a credible link between responsible production in agriculture.

The South African food manufacturer is currently developing other future sourcing projects that include Origanum in the Oudtshoorn area, Rosemary in the Dysselsdorp area, growing chilli's in Rwanda, looking at the herbs and spices that are local to Africa that are abundant and finally, reusing food that is considered 'lost' during commercialisation.

5.2. Final conclusion and heuristic value

The following study has helped to highlight the important need for agribusinesses to implement sustainable sourcing practises and how it can be achieved. The findings from the study were insightful and provided an in-depth understanding of the of the different sourcing practised used by the South African food manufacturer and there

was past literature to support sustainable sourcing practises. Therefore, the participant helped to provide the researcher with insightful information that was used to address the research goals and research question of the study.

The research study that was conducted contributes towards the strategic management discipline, in that it will allow students and other agribusinesses to gain an understanding of how sustainable sourcing practises can be implemented. This study has shown that a sustainable strategy is needed for the longevity of any agribusiness or organisation but can be applied in other business fields successfully. The study builds upon business sustainability and helps to address sustainability within agribusiness, stating that sustainability must start at the source, in this case the farm, and then move into the business with policies and projects.

The research study aimed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge of sustainability with agriculture by adding to the literature that is already available on sustainable sourcing practises, and the possible solutions to this industry. More specifically, it added to existing but limited literature on the sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer. By contributing to the existing body of knowledge on agricultural sustainability, it helped to highlight the growing concern on the topic and that intervention that is needed by other businesses, organisations and legislative actions of governments worldwide to protect farming lands through proper farming techniques.

It is evident that agribusinesses must adopt sustainable sourcing practises to exist in the future and this was highlighted by past literature. However, there exists a gap where more research and practises to be done. This provides the possibility of future research where the inclusion of a larger sample size will contribute towards a more in-depth data collection on other sustainable sourcing methods. The future research will allow for exploring different solutions and highlight how agribusinesses can use the sourcing practises used in South African by the food manufacturer as solutions to their sustainable sourcing in other countries. Furthermore, this study briefly explored that other agribusinesses are doing around the world from Griffith Food (Menon, 2018) to Nedspice (Clemenson & van der Bie, 2018: 24). Given the continuing advancement in sustainable agriculture and the creation of new of technology and improved practises globally, the possible opportunities for the future exists in

exploring new farming techniques along with agribusinesses making sustainability a core feature of their business plan.

5.3. Ethical considerations

Ethics is a set of moral conducts that governs behaviour (Louw, 2016: 263). These moral conducts must apply to researcher as it is of utmost importance that the researcher is a person of integrity and can maintain certain principles. Unethical research can be harmful and discredit the study. Below are the ethical concerns to the study and how they were addressed.

5.3.1. Ethical consideration from the participants' side

The participant had been informed and consent was giving to partaking in the study. The participant knew what the study was about, and whether they choose confidentiality or anonymity. The study did not have participants to speak on personal matters therefore, the participant was not at risk of personal harm. The participant had the right to withdraw at any stage during the interview. before the interview started the researcher explained the interview process to the participant, that way the participant knew what was expected. The participant was informed that the interviews will be recorded, and that their privacy will be protected. The participants were assured confidentiality to protect their identities as a matter of principle, even though they are known to the researcher. The interviews were kept as confidential by labelling the recorded interview as "participant". The interview recordings are stored in a locked file on the researcher's computer that is password protected and shall be deleted within 2 years. The participant could lie about that about the sourcing practises. To solve this the researcher had asked for articles or papers that will validate the participant in order to compare the results to that of the participant.

5.3.2. Ethical consideration from the researcher

The researcher will make it the top priority to promote the participants wellbeing, showing respect and consideration and promote non-maleficence and beneficence.

To ensure there was no false information presented by the researcher, firstly, the researcher did not fabricating the interview and secondly, by collecting and analysing the information provided by the participant in an objective manner did not fabricate or change the results to reflect the researchers bias or desired outcome. The researcher stands nothing to gain by misusing information or distorting result as it would compromise the study. The information and data collected will not be used for any other purposes outside of the study. Any contact details left by the participant will be deleted and the audio recordings will not be shared with any person or organisation unless the participant agrees to it.

Assurance was given to the participant that the information given during the interview shall not be made available or shared with or person, organisation, or business. Before any interviews took place the researcher first obtained ethical clearance from the ethics committee and the approval letter can be found attached. Audio recording clearance was also obtained for from the ethics committee before conducting the interview along with the participants acknowledged that the interview was being recorded and written consent was given.

5.4. Limitations

Limitations constrain or cause negative impacts on the research study and tend to be outside the researchers' control (Enslin, 2016: 275). Limitations often include finance, information, and time (Enslin, 2016: 275).

The main limit to the study identified by the research was the interview being limited to one participant. Although all the information on the sourcing practises could be collected through one participant, the researcher would have wanted more than one to cross reference the other and provide more credibility to the research.

The access to information on the sourcing practises may be limited to protect the intellectual property of the company, the farmers identify and protect the company from competitors. Contracts between farmers and agribusinesses are normally created on an annually bases and determined by global and local information and business needs, this means that contracts cannot be created longer than 6-12 months. The problem this causes is that due to a various of factors results of the contract will differ year on year and what work in one year might not work in another.

Natural disasters could affect the yield output one year and this could distort the contract results. The limitation of online interviews could affect the results. Interviews take up time. COVID-19 acted as a major limit to the researcher. Online interviews can hinder the sharing of information. Along with the given the scope of the situation, time was a limit. The analysis of the data to produce findings took up time. The time-consuming process of the study, the researcher was limited in terms of time available to do additional work.

The research identified further limitations which include:

Agribusiness sustainability is a relatively new concept and farmers who have been using pesticides and fertilisers for decades have contaminated the soil they farm on. Even with a change in farm techniques towards more sustainable techniques the soil will remain contaminated for years to come. The last limitation was the research being limited to one business. By doing the sourcing practises of two or more agribusinesses the researcher could compare and contrast the sourcing practises between each agribusiness to gain a deeper and more in-depth understanding of sustainable sourcing practises.

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Annexures

Annexure A: Information sheet for participants and consent form template



CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern, My name is Brandon John Keeling, and I am a student at Varsity College Cape Town. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Miss Doulette Braak about the sourcing practises used by your business in ensuring a sustainable supply of herbs and spices for production. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of sustainability within agriculture and provide businesses with a sustainable supply of quality raw materials from farmers. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study?
I would like to invite you to participate in this research because I believe that you will aid in answering the research question. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to partake in an online interview view Zoom and answer questions related to the sourcing practises of your business. You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?
Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your knowledge of the sourcing practises used by your business. If you find at any

stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Varsity College Cape Town will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Bachelor of Honours in Management. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Annexure B: Gatekeepers letter and request to conduct research



Gatekeepers letter/ request to conduct research

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to ask your permission to conduct research at your business.

My name is Brandon John Keeling, a Bachelor of Honours in Management student at Varsity College a brand of the Independent Institute of Education (IIE). The research I wish to conduct for my honours project titled *A qualitative analysis of the sourcing practices used to ensure a sustainable supply herbs and spices in the production of a South African food manufacturer.*

The aim of this study is the sustainability of sourcing practices used by your business. The project consists of gathering data on the sourcing practises of agribusinesses to ensure a sustainable supply of raw materials for the processing plant. The nature of your firm's participation will be answering questions on what sourcing practises are used to achieve a sustainable supply of herbs and spices. The data will be gathered via online interviews involving those who work in the procurement of herbs and spices. The online interview will take no more than an hour on Zoom. The data from the interview will be used to answer the research question. The interviewees identify is to be protected however, my supervisory and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.

Yours sincerely

Student: Brandon Keeling

Supervisor: Doulette Braak

My contact details are as follows:

Brandon Keeling

The contact details of my supervisor/navigator/lecturer are as follows:

Doulette Braak



Gatekeepers Approval

Consent form to conduct research at my company	
I,	
Representative of	
My capacity:	
Give my permission thatmay conduct research at my company. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I reserve the right to withdraw this permission at any time. I also understand that research reports are available in the library and IIE Repository unless I indicate below that I would not	
Select below:	
• I request that my company's identity be kept confidential.	
• My company can be identified in the study	
• The study may never be available on the repository.	
• The study may be made available on the repository.	
• The study may be made available on the repository after months.	
Signature	Date

Annexure C: Consent form for audio or video recording



CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to allow Brandon John Keeling to audio record my interviews as part of the research about the sourcing practises used by your business in ensuring a sustainable supply of herbs and spices in production. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. • The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer. • Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.	
Signature	Date

Annexure D: Ethical clearance letter



7th July 2020

Student name: Brandon Keeling

Student number: 17229504

Campus: Varsity College Cape Town

Re: Approval of IIE BACHELOR OF COMMERCE HONOURS: MANAGEMENT Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns, and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

Supervisor: **Doulette Braak**

Co-Supervisor: **Karel Marais**

Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC): **Dr. Marizanne Grundlingh**

Annexure E: Interview questions

Interview questions:

1. What are some of the challenges facing the supply of herbs and spices for the business?
2. How does the business address these problems?
3. How are contracts created to ensure a sustainable supply of herbs and spices for the business?
4. Can you please provide examples of these contracts that have been successful in creating agricultural sustainability?
5. How have these contracts benefited both the business and farmer?
6. How does the business empower farmers to use sustainable farming techniques?
7. How has sustainable farming led to a sustainable supply of herbs and spices?
8. How does the involvement of the business in agriculture lead to job create and community development in poor farming communities?

Annexure E: Summary Document Table

TITLE: A qualitative analysis of the sourcing practices used to ensure a sustainable supply herbs and spices in the production of a South African food manufacturer.

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Questions	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
Gain an understanding of the sourcing practises used by the South African food Manufacturer that will help create a sustainable supply of herbs and spices for the future.	In sourcing herbs and spices, what are the key sourcing practises used by the South African food manufacturer that will ensure a consistent, high quality and sustainable supply That will not compromise Future production?	This study is Important as climate change and economic factors are having an impact on farming. this study aims to provide answers to how Agribusinesses can become sustainable through sourcing practises.	Eaton & Shepard Bidzakin, J Reher, E Singh, S	Theme 1: Past Theme 2: Present Theme 3: Future	Interpretivism Epistemology: objective knowledge was favoured as the aim was to understand. Ontology: Reality here was Governed by pactises Axiology: the agr business Could discuss their sourcing practises and help others.	Qualitative	Interview	Confidentiality, Informed consent, dealing with sensitive information, Falsifying information, Bias and misusing information. Audio recording clearance. Consent form.	The South African food manufacturer has created a sustainable sourcing model. This model focus is on teaching South African farmers and helping provide better techniques and technology to help them in Supplying herbs and the spices	For the food Manufacturer to invest in new knowledge on technological products to help farmers. Invest in Different regions across Africa. Future research: Explore more than one agribusiness.
						Population				
						Population was employees at the business. Characteristics are individuals whom Work in the procurement department of the Business.				
Research Problem	Secondary Questions/ Hypotheses/ Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Method	Limitations	Key Contribution	
Due to climate change, price volatility, lack of farming land and other issues affect the ability of farmers to produce quality yields. The low yields will Negatively affect any Business who rely on These farmers.	N/A	Sustainable sourcing Contract farming Environment sustainability Sustainable farming techniques Value chain	Agency Theory			Non-probability sampling Purposive sampling Sample size- 1	Qualitative content analyses Thematic analysis	Misinterpret questions. Time Lack of previous research Budget constraints Only one participant Length of contracts Nature disasters & Unable to contact farmers	Contributes to society and to agr businesses. Contributes to sustainable agriculture and Sustainable Sourcing Practises. Contributes to Community Development And job creation	