Gendered Power Relations, Food Production and Socioeconomic Livelihoods of Female-Headed Households in Mbarara District

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Declaration

This Thesis is a result of my independent investigation and has never been submitted to another institution of higher learning for any academic award.

Sign..... 

Date.....10/9/2025

Charles Godfrey Mukundane

Approval

This Thesis has been conducted under our supervision and is now ready for submission for examination with our approval.

Sign..... **Date**.....September 10, 2025

Dr. Medard Twinamatsiko Katonera, PhD

Sign..... **Date**...10/09/25

Dr. Clementia Neema Murembe, PhD

Dedication

I dedicate this research to the academic community advancing gender studies, the resilient female-headed households whose experiences shaped this work, my devoted wife and children for their loving support, my siblings for their unwavering encouragement, and all who contributed to making this scholarly journey possible, may this work meaningfully inform policies that empower vulnerable households.

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Abstract

This study examines the complex interplay between gendered power relations, food production, and socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District, Southwestern Uganda. Despite global and national commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) emphasizing gender equality and women's empowerment, female-headed households in Mbarara continue to face structural barriers rooted in patriarchal norms and customary land tenure systems that limit their access to and control over productive resources like land, credit, and agricultural inputs. Using a mixed methods approach grounded in the Sustainable Livelihood Approach and Power Relations Theory, this study explores how this gendered power imbalances restrict female heads' decision-making autonomy in food production and resource utilization, leading to diminished agricultural productivity and persistent livelihood vulnerabilities. A concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design was employed, collecting quantitative data through structured surveys of 186 randomly selected female household heads and qualitative data via in-depth interviews with 10 key informants. The findings reveal that a significant proportion of female-headed households (75%) operate on land to which they lack formal title, limiting their investment in long-term food production strategies. Gendered roles and decision-making power within family and community structures were found to be major determinants of access to agricultural inputs. Specifically, only 28% of the surveyed households reported having full autonomy in deciding which crops to plant and where to sell their produce. Furthermore, the study found a strong correlation between food production autonomy and socioeconomic livelihood. Households with greater decision-making power showed a 45% higher average income from agricultural sales compared to those with limited autonomy. The research also found that while 85% of households were engaged in subsistence farming, only 15% had access to formal financial services or microcredit, further hindering their economic advancement. The findings reveal that a significant proportion of female-headed households (75%) operate on land to which they lack formal title, limiting their investment in long-term food production strategies. Gendered roles and decision-making power within family and community structures were found to be major determinants of access to agricultural inputs. Specifically, only 28% of the surveyed households reported having full autonomy in deciding which crops to plant and where to sell their produce. Furthermore, the study found a strong correlation between food production autonomy and socioeconomic livelihood. Households with greater decision-making power showed a 45% higher average income from agricultural sales compared to those with limited autonomy. The research also found that while 85% of households were engaged in subsistence farming, only 15% had access to formal financial services or microcredit, further hindering their economic advancement.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction to the Study

This study explores gendered power relations, food production, and socioeconomic livelihoods in female-headed households in Mbarara District, structured into five chapters: Chapter One introduces the research problem, objectives, and significance; Chapter Two reviews relevant literature and theoretical frameworks; Chapter Three outlines the methodology, including design, sampling, and data analysis; Chapter Four presents the empirical findings; and Chapter Five discusses the results, their implications, and recommendations for policy and practice.

1.1 Background to the Study

The background to the study is segmented into historical, theoretical, conceptual and contextual background on the gendered power relations, food production and socioeconomic livelihoods of female headed households.

1.1.1 Historical Background

Historically, patriarchal traditions in Africa structured power and resources around male dominance, systematically excluding female-headed households from direct ownership and decision-making. In precolonial societies, land and livestock were passed through patrilineal lines, and household production was organized under male authority, leaving female heads of households, often widows, divorcees, or single mothers dependent on kinship networks for survival (Goody, 2018; Tamale, 2020). Colonial administrations reinforced these exclusions by codifying customary tenure and privileging male household heads in land registration and taxation (Whitehead & Tsikata, 2003). Consequently, female-headed households emerged as a structurally

marginalized category, disproportionately confined to insecure land access, low-status agricultural labor, and poverty traps (Okali, 2011).

Postcolonial reforms across Africa did little to redress these inequalities. Agricultural modernization programs and land reforms frequently identified *household heads* as their target beneficiaries implicitly assumed to be male, thereby sidelining female-headed households from credit, extension services, and commercial farming opportunities (Doss, 2013). This historical legacy continues to shape the vulnerabilities of female-headed households in the contemporary era.

Global development discourse has increasingly acknowledged the marginalization of female-headed households as central to debates on gendered inequality. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), and the African Union's Agenda 2063 recognize the structural disadvantages of households led by women, particularly in relation to land tenure and food production. The Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) situates female household heads as key beneficiaries of empowerment policies, emphasizing equal rights to resources, technology, and decision-making.

Despite this global recognition, structural gaps persist. UN Women (2023) highlights that female-headed households account for nearly 30% of households worldwide, yet remain significantly poorer than male-headed households. In sub-Saharan Africa, women provide over 60% of agricultural labor, but female-headed households are less likely to own land, adopt improved technologies, or access credit (FAO, 2021). These disparities demonstrate that empowerment frameworks must address household-level dynamics rather than treating "women" as a homogenous category (Palacios-Lopez et al., 2017).

Several countries provide insight into the persistent challenges facing female-headed households despite progressive reforms. In Rwanda, constitutional and legal reforms have guaranteed equal land inheritance rights, and female-headed households have gained visibility in national agricultural programs. Yet, rural women heading households still face labor shortages and limited decision-making power within extended family networks (Abbott et al., 2022). In South Africa, post-apartheid land redistribution has sought to empower marginalized groups, but female-headed households often struggle to assert ownership under customary tenure regimes dominated by male chiefs (Staal, 2019). Similarly, in Ethiopia, female household heads have benefited from cooperative membership, yet their integration into commercial agricultural value chains remains limited due to persistent biases (Diallo & Wouterse, 2023). These experiences highlight the paradox of policy frameworks that recognize women broadly, but fail to resolve the specific vulnerabilities of households headed by women.

Uganda has aligned itself with global commitments to gender equality through constitutional, policy, and programmatic interventions. The 1995 Constitution guarantees equal rights for men and women (Articles 21, 32, 33), while the 1998 Land Act sought to improve women's land tenure security. The National Gender Policy (2007; revised 2017) and Vision 2040 frame female empowerment as central to development. Programs such as NAADS, Operation Wealth Creation, and the Parish Development Model have identified female-headed households as key beneficiaries. Yet, patriarchal norms and structural inequities undermine these efforts. Female-headed households often lack secure land tenure, with only 16% of women in rural Uganda owning land independently (Barongo et al., 2023). Without male household labor, female heads face constraints in accessing agricultural inputs, extension services, and credit facilities, further exacerbating their

vulnerability (Ahikire, 2018). These realities underscore a persistent gap between Uganda's gender policy commitments and the lived experiences of female-headed households.

Although Uganda has developed a robust gender policy framework in line with SDG 5, female-headed households remain disproportionately constrained by patriarchal norms and structural inequalities. Their limited access to productive resources and decision-making power not only reduces household food security but also undermines national development goals. This study therefore interrogates the intersection between gendered power relations, food production, and the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District, situating Uganda's experience within global debates and local realities.

1.1.2 Theoretical Background

The Sustainable Livelihood Approach, advanced by Scoones (2015b), provides a foundational framework for analyzing how female-headed households in Mbarara District navigate socioeconomic challenges in food production. According to Ma et al. (2024); (2022); Nyathi (2025), Sustainable Livelihood Approach posits that livelihoods are shaped by access to and control over five key forms of capital like natural, financial, human, social, and physical and emphasizes resilience in the face of shocks. Oberhauser and Langill (2025) emphasize that a core assumption of Sustainable Livelihood Approach is that enhancing these assets leads to improved livelihood outcomes. However, Sustainable Livelihood Approach has been critiqued for its limited attention to power dynamics, often treating households as homogeneous units without accounting for intra-household inequalities (Djurfeldt, 2021; Tran et al., 2023; Yu, 2020). This oversight is particularly problematic in gendered analyses, as women's access to resources is frequently mediated by structural barriers that Sustainable Livelihood Approach does not fully interrogate (Call & Sellers, 2019; Tavenner & Crane, 2022).

To address this gap, Power Relations Theory, as articulated by Connell (1996, 2016), provides a critical lens for examining how patriarchal norms and hegemonic masculinity shape resource distribution within households and communities. Connell's theory challenges Sustainable Livelihood Approach's implicit assumption that asset ownership equates to control, demonstrating instead that even when female headed households possess livelihood assets (e.g., land, social networks), gendered power imbalances restrict their full utilization (Alobo Loison, 2019; Kabeer, 2018, 2024; Wei et al., 2021). For instance, while Sustainable Livelihood Approach highlights social capital (kinship networks) as a resilience mechanism(Liru, 2020; Ma et al., 2024), Power Relations Theory reveals how male-dominated family structures often co-opt women's labor and resources, even in ostensibly female-headed households (Agarwal, 1998; Gaddis et al., 2022). A widow may nominally "head" her household, yet male relatives frequently retain control over land inheritance or agricultural income (Hirschon, 2023; Reddy, 2020).

The key tenets of Sustainable Livelihood Approach are asset accumulation, vulnerability reduction, and institutional support, remain useful for mapping the material conditions of female-headed households in Mbarara District. However, its weaknesses, such as the neglect of intersectional power dynamics, necessitate supplementation with Connell's framework. Meanwhile, Power Relations Theory offers a robust critique of structural gender inequalities but risks overemphasizing constraints without accounting for women's agency (Folbre, 2019; Rahmasari & Nurhayati, 2019). Some female-headed households emerge from male migration or deliberate choice, challenging traditional power structures (Nalule, 2015; Rwangire & Kabeba Muriisa, 2021). Thus, while Power Relations Theory exposes systemic barriers, SLA helps identify potential leverage points for intervention, such as strengthening women's access to credit and extension services (Kabeer, 2018).

By integrating both theories, this study moves beyond Sustainable Livelihood Approach's asset-based analysis to interrogate how gendered power structures mediate livelihood outcomes in Mbarara District. While Sustainable Livelihood Approach maps the resources available, Power Relations Theory explains why women's access remains precarious, shaped by hegemonic masculinity, discriminatory inheritance norms, and institutional biases (Connell, 2020; Magaraggia, 2012). This dual framework is particularly valuable in contexts like rural Uganda, where patriarchal systems intersect with economic vulnerabilities to perpetuate food insecurity among female headed households (Patnaik & Prasad, 2014; Hang et al., 2024).

In a nutshell, Power Relations Theory critiques Sustainable Livelihood Approach's occasional homogenization of households (Sen & Mukherjee, 2017), emphasizing that female-headed households are not monolithic. Some arise from male migration (Folbre, 2019) or choice (Rahmasari & Nurhayati, 2019), challenging traditional power dynamics (Cassidy, 2022; Fernandez, 2023). Yet, even in these cases, broader societal gender norms influence resource access (Badstue et al., 2020; Marcus, 2021). By integrating Connell's theory, the study moves beyond Sustainable Livelihood Approach's asset-based analysis to interrogate how power structures perpetuate inequities in food production and livelihoods. Available literature misses out on the interaction between the three variables, which creates a necessity for studying these variables with a special focus on the Mbarara District.

1.1.3 Conceptual Background

This study's conceptual framework is anchored in the intersection of gendered power relations, agricultural production systems, and socioeconomic livelihoods within female-headed households in Mbarara District, Uganda. The framework examines how deeply entrenched patriarchal norms mediate women's access to and control over productive resources, shaping agricultural outcomes

and household well-being (Njuki et al., 2023; Singh, 2025). By integrating Raewyn Connell's Power Relations Theory and Ian Scoones' Sustainable Livelihood Approach, the study advances a nuanced understanding of how structural gender inequalities constrain female headed household's ability to achieve food security and economic resilience.

1.1.3.1 Gendered Power Relations: Structural Barriers to Resource Access

Gendered power relations refer to the socially constructed hierarchies that privilege men over women in controlling productive assets, decision-making, and labor allocation (Bradshaw, 2002; Connell, 2020). These gendered power relations manifest in both internal household dynamics (male relatives influencing food production choices despite female headship) and external institutional biases such as discriminatory land tenure systems, credit access barriers (Jackson, 2003; Awoke et al., 2025). In Uganda's patrilineal societies, customary land inheritance laws systematically exclude women, forcing many female-headed households into precarious, temporary land access arrangements (Bafaki, 2021; Rwangire & Muriisa, 2021). Even when women legally own land, sociocultural norms often restrict their autonomy in crop selection, income management, or leasing decisions (Davison, 2019a; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2019).

Gendered power relations further intersect with labor exploitation, where women's agricultural contributions constituting 60-80% of subsistence farming labor in sub-Saharan Africa, are undervalued and uncompensated at household level (Ene-Obong et al., 2017; Pierotti et al., 2022). Female heads frequently prioritize subsistence crops (beans, maize among others) over high-value cash crops due to male kin's commercial control (Ahmed, 2020; Aberman & Roopnaraine, 2020). This dynamic reflects Connell's (2020) concept of emphasized femininity, wherein women's roles are confined to reproductive and caregiving labor, reinforcing economic dependency. Whether the female is a family head, she remains subordinate to men in the eyes of the society. This perception

has greatly influenced gendered power imbalances in most societies in the contemporary Ugandan society, despite the existence of gender mainstreaming initiatives.

1.1.3.2 Female-Headed Households: Typologies and Vulnerabilities

Female-headed households are not a monolithic category; their livelihoods vary by structural formation (widowhood, male migration, or voluntary single motherhood) and resource access vary accordingly in this aspect (Folbre, 2019; Rahmasari & Nurhayati, 2019). De jure female headed households (widows) often face acute asset dispossession, while de facto female headed households (wives of migrant laborers) may retain nominal male oversight but still struggle with decision-making autonomy (Okonya & Kroschel, 2014; Osarfo, 2023). Sustainable Livelihood Approach's vulnerability context underscores how female headed households are disproportionately affected by shocks climate variability, market fluctuations, or health crises due to limited asset buffers (Liru, 2020; Scoones, 2015). For instance, in Southwestern Uganda, female headed households rely heavily on informal social networks for labor exchange and emergency support, yet these networks often replicate patriarchal power structures, wherein male community leaders dictate resource distribution (Nalule, 2015; Wondimu et al., 2022b).

1.1.3.3 Food Production: Gendered Constraints and Adaptive Strategies

Food production in female-headed households encompasses crop cultivation, livestock rearing, and post-harvest management, all mediated by gendered access to land, decision making, family collaboration, credit, and extension services(Garner et al., 2023; Icheria, 2019). Key operational indicators include:

Productivity: According to Achandi (2019); Gebre et al. (2021) productivity in female-headed households refers to the measurable output of agricultural activities relative to inputs such as land,

labor, and resources. Nyambo et al. (2022); Peprah et al. (2021); Rahiel et al. (2018) report that productivity is often assessed through crop yields, livestock output, and post-harvest efficiency, which tend to be lower compared to male-headed households due to systemic gender disparities. These gaps stem from constrained access to productive land (typically smaller, fragmented, or less fertile plots), limited adoption of mechanization (due to financial barriers or social norms), and poorer access to quality seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation (Achandi, 2019; Peprah et al., 2021).

Additionally, women's dual burden of productive and reproductive labor reduces the time available for optimal farm management (Gibbons, 2023; Liu et al., 2019), while discriminatory norms restrict their control over income and decision-making(Njuki et al., 2023; Pierotti et al., 2022), further dampening productivity. Elias et al. (2023) notes that Institutional barriers, such as unequal access to credit and extension services, exacerbate these challenges, perpetuating cycles of lower agricultural efficiency and food insecurity. Addressing these disparities requires interventions that improve resource equity, gender-sensitive technologies, and policies that strengthen women's agency in agriculture (Boonabana, 2015; Azumah et al., 2023).

Decision-making: According to Homann-Kee Tui et al. (2024); Kidane (2019); Madaphine (2024), decision-making in female-headed households often involves a strategic trade-off between crop diversification (growing multiple crops) and commercial monocropping (focusing on a single cash crop), shaped by gendered constraints and risk perceptions (Madaphine, 2024). Diversification serves as a critical risk-mitigation strategy, buffering against climate shocks, pest outbreaks, and market fluctuations while ensuring household food security (Lelea et al., 2022).

Studies by Delanerolle et al. (2025); Haq et al. (2022); Lusui (2023) reveal that women farmers, who typically bear greater responsibility for family nutrition, often prioritize diverse subsistence crops (vegetables, legumes among others) alongside staples, reducing vulnerability to crop failure.

In contrast, monocropping while potentially more profitable requires stable inputs, market access, and capital, resources that female-headed households frequently lack due to discriminatory land tenure systems, limited credit access, and gendered barriers to commercialization (Rehman et al., 2019). Social norms further complicate this choice, as women's decision-making autonomy may be constrained by male relatives or community expectations. Crop diversification as a risk-mitigation strategy versus commercial monocropping (Lelea et al., 2022; Rehman et al., 2019).

Post-harvest losses: According to Lelea et al. (2022); Ndagire (2021a); Snider, Adraki, et al. (2024), post-harvest losses in female-headed households significantly undermine agricultural productivity and income due to inadequate storage facilities, limited processing technologies, and gendered disparities in resource access. Lelea et al. (2022) adds that women farmers often face higher post-harvest losses than their male counterparts, as they are more likely to rely on traditional storage methods that expose crops to pests, mold, and weather damage (Nordhagen, 2021; Snider, Kwami, et al., 2024). In addition, Lelea et al. (2022); Nordhagen (2021) reveal that limited access to modern post-harvest facilities affects women capability to manage post-harvest losses. Nordhagen (2021) further stress that these post-harvest losses disproportionately affect female-headed households, deepening food insecurity and reducing potential earnings. Snider, Adraki, et al. (2024); Yadav et al. (2025) propose interventions such as affordable storage solutions, gender-responsive training in post-harvest management, and cooperative-based processing initiatives could mitigate losses and enhance women's economic resilience in agricultural value chains.

1.1.3.4 Socioeconomic Livelihoods: Food Security, Income, and Well-being

The Sustainable Livelihood Approach's livelihood outcomes framework elucidates how gendered power relations culminate in:

Food security: According to Mwaura (2022); Ndagire (2021a); Oburu et al. (2024), food security in female-headed households is compromised by systemic gender disparities that limit agricultural productivity, market access, and dietary diversity, despite women's prioritization of subsistence farming for household consumption (Haq et al., 2022; Mpuuga et al., 2021; Mwaura, 2022). The subsistence farming by these female heads focuses on staple crops, though ensuring basic caloric needs, often comes at the expense of cultivating or procuring diverse, nutrient-rich foods, exacerbating malnutrition (Gali et al., 2024; Mechlowitz, 2023). Accordingly, climate shocks and post-harvest losses further destabilize food supplies, disproportionately affecting these households due to their limited resilience capacity (Hertel et al., 2021; Raj et al., 2022). Howland et al. (2021); Njuki et al. (2023); Platform (2024) proposes that addressing these challenges requires gender-sensitive interventions that improve women's access to productive resources, credit, extension services, and nutrition education, while promoting diversified farming systems and post-harvest technologies to enhance both food availability and dietary quality throughout the year (Mutungi et al., 2023; Nordhagen, 2021; Swain et al., 2021).

Household income: According to Dusabemariya (2021); Getawey (2023), household income for female-headed agricultural households encompasses the combined earnings from farm production and off-farm informal sector activities, which are often unstable, seasonal, and insufficient to lift families out of poverty (Bayu, 2021; Vimefall & Levin, 2023). In this aspect, female-headed households often face economic hardships due to their reliance on unstable informal sector work such as petty trading, seasonal labor, or artisanal production to supplement unpredictable farm earnings(Getawey, 2023; Mathebula, 2020). This dual livelihood strategy stems from gendered barriers to formal employment, limited access to credit for agricultural expansion, and the seasonal nature of smallholder farming(Bayu, 2021; Donath et al., 2024; Dusabemariya, 2021). Studies by

Ndagire (2021a); Njuki et al. (2023); Olivier (2023); (Platform, 2024) propose gender-sensitive policies such as nutrition-sensitive agriculture programs, women's land rights enforcement, and social protection schemes to enhance both food availability and dietary quality.

Psychosocial wellbeing: According to Eckersley (2024); Eiroa-Orosa (2020); Kumar (2020), psychosocial wellbeing refers to the dynamic interplay between an individual's psychological state and their social environment, which together shape their overall quality of life and ability to cope with adversity. Psychosocial wellbeing in female-headed households is significantly strained by the intersection of social stigma, excessive labour burdens, and chronic anxiety stemming from economic insecurity (Wondimu et al., 2022a; Ndagire, 2021a). These women often face community marginalization due to patriarchal norms that view female-headed households as deviant, leading to isolation and reduced social support(Kwarteng, 2023; Meyer, 2023). Simultaneously, they bear triple labour burdens productive, reproductive, and community labour which deplete physical and emotional energy (Husselmann, 2016; Yoosefi Lebni et al., 2020). In effect, the constant stress of economic challenges exacerbates mental health struggles, manifesting as anxiety, depression, yet access to psychosocial support remains limited by cost, stigma, or rural service gaps(Chakrabarti, 2021; Eiroa-Orosa, 2020; Nyakato et al., 2020).

1.1.3.5 Policy and Theoretical Implications

The study's integration of **Power Relations Theory** and **Sustainable Livelihood Approach** reveals that empowering female headed households requires:

Land tenure System: In Uganda, the land tenure system encompasses the legal and customary frameworks governing land ownership, access, and use, with four main types recognized under the 1995 Constitution and Land Act 1998 (Kishaija & Heil, 2025; Musinguzi et al., 2021; Walker et

al., 2025): Mailo tenure (central Uganda, with perpetual ownership and tenant conflicts), freehold (absolute ownership), leasehold (fixed-term leases), and customary tenure (traditional communal ownership, predominant in rural areas) (Bakibisemu, 2019). In Mbarara District, customary tenure is the most widespread, with land often held communally by clans and inherited patrilineally among the Banyankole, though urbanization and commercialization have led to increasing individualization, freehold acquisitions, and leasehold arrangements in Mbarara District (Ahumuza, 2019). A study by van Leeuwen (2014) on renegotiating customary tenure reform, land governance and tenure security revealed that in as much as people in other parts of the country believe that in Mbarara District and Southwestern Uganda in general, land is privately owned and registered, the case was different. Smallholder farmers with small pieces of land with no titles and got this land through inheritance. They therefore do not fall under neither leasehold nor freehold and certainly not Mailo arrangement.

Gender-responsive financial services: Gender-responsive financial services, such as collateral-free loans for women (Busingye et al., 2018), are designed to address the systemic barriers female farmers face in accessing credit, including lack of property titles for collateral, discriminatory lending practices, and socio-cultural restrictions on women's financial inclusion(Adegbite & Machethe, 2020; Mpuuga et al., 2021; Ndawula, 2016). These services often incorporate flexible repayment terms, group lending models, and financial literacy training to align with women's economic realities such as irregular income streams and caregiving responsibilities(Adegbite & Machethe, 2020; Peprah et al., 2021). Studies by Busingye at al (2018) Adegbite and Machethe (2020) show such interventions not only enhance women's economic agency but also foster broader social empowerment, as participation in credit groups strengthens collective bargaining power and challenges gendered norms around financial decision-making. However, long-term

sustainability requires complementary measures, including land rights reforms and partnerships with local women's organizations to ensure services are culturally adapted and accessible in rural areas (Midamba & Ouko, 2024; Rwangire et al., 2021).

By centering gender as a structural determinant, this framework challenges homogenized household models in development economics (Sen & Mukherjee, 2017) and advocates for intersectional policy interventions to break cycles of gendered poverty. In a nutshell, Acosta et al. (2019) suggest that land reform policies must recognize women's customary rights, while financial institutions should develop gender-responsive credit products. A study by Barongo et al. (2023) expressed that agricultural programs must actively engage female headed households in extension services and market linkages, ensuring that productivity gains translate into improved livelihoods. By centering gender in the analysis of food systems, this research contributes to broader debates on rural development, feminist economics, and sustainable agriculture. This conceptual background lays the foundation for empirical investigation into how gendered power relations in Mbarara District shape and are shaped by food production and socioeconomic resilience in female-headed households.

1.1.4 Contextual Framework

Globally, female-headed households represent a critical but structurally marginalized category in agricultural economies. While women contribute nearly 50% of agricultural labor, they own less than 20% of agricultural land (Doss et al., 2018; Finch, 2024; Palacios-Lopez et al., 2017). This paradox underscores deep-seated gender inequalities in access to productive resources, decision-making, and livelihood security (Finch, 2024). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) explicitly address these disparities: SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) commits to ensuring equal rights to land, resources, and participation, while SDG 2 (End

hunger, achieve food security, and promote sustainable agriculture) emphasizes inclusive agricultural systems. Yet, implementation remains inconsistent, with interventions often focusing narrowly on productivity while neglecting the structural power relations that marginalize female household heads (Atukunda et al., 2021; Swaiss, 2024). Climate change further compounds these inequalities, as female-headed households typically farming smaller plots with fewer resources face disproportionate exposure to environmental shocks (Glazebrook et al., 2020).

Within Africa, historical processes entrenched these inequalities. Pre-colonial societies often featured more flexible divisions of labor, with women and female household heads actively engaged in both cultivation and trade (Agbaje, 2021; Bryceson, 2019). Colonial rule disrupted these systems, imposing patriarchal land tenure structures and privileging male-dominated cash crop economies, thereby systematically marginalizing women and female heads of households (Yesufu, 2018). Post-independence structural adjustment programs of the 1980s and 1990s deepened these burdens by reducing public agricultural support and liberalizing markets, which disproportionately affected labor-constrained female-headed households (Mussa et al., 2024). At the policy level, frameworks such as the African Union's Maputo Protocol (2003) and the Malabo Declaration (2014) affirmed commitments to gender equity in agriculture (Chitiga et al., 2020; Hendriks et al., 2019). However, progress remains limited: only 13% of African countries have achieved the Malabo target of allocating 10% of national budgets to agriculture (Hendriks et al., 2019; Ulimwengu et al., 2023). Consequently, female-headed households, constituting nearly 30% of rural households tend to farm smaller plots with limited access to land, credit, and extension services, perpetuating cycles of vulnerability (Reynolds et al., 2020).

Uganda reflects this broader continental pattern. Nationally, 29.1% of households are headed by women (UBOS, 2024), and these households face poverty rates of 22%, higher than the national

average of 19%. The UBOS Multidimensional Poverty Report (2022) further reveals that 49% of female-headed households experience multidimensional poverty compared to 39% of male-headed households. Land access remains particularly unequal: in Masaka District, Kes et al. (2011) found that only 30% of female household heads had full ownership of land, while 29% had no control at all. These inequalities persist despite Uganda's strong alignment with SDG 5. The 1995 Constitution guarantees gender equality, the 1998 Land Act recognized women's rights to land, and the National Gender Policy (2007; revised 2017) mainstreams gender in all development sectors. Major programs including NAADS, Operation Wealth Creation, and the Parish Development Model have identified female-headed households as key beneficiaries. Yet patriarchal norms and institutional biases continue to erode implementation, leaving many female household heads structurally excluded from land ownership, credit access, and productive agricultural opportunities (Ahikire, 2018; Rwangire & Kabeba Muriisa, 2021).

Empirical research in Uganda provides important insights but also highlights gaps. Busingye et al. (2018b) studied credit access among female household heads, Donath et al. (2024) examined resource ownership and shifting family structures, and Rwangire & Kabeba Muriisa (2021) analyzed women's secure land rights and food security in Isingiro District. Similarly, Boonabana (2015) showed that gender-related inequalities are particularly visible among female-headed households in Hoima District. However, these studies have largely focused on land rights, credit, and financial access, without systematically analyzing the intersection of gendered power relations, food production, and socioeconomic livelihoods among female-headed households. In Mbarara District, where female-headed households are increasingly visible, there is scant empirical work linking global SDG 5 commitments to local realities of food production and livelihood security.

Thus, while Uganda has adopted progressive frameworks aligned with SDG 5 and SDG 2, female-headed households remain disproportionately marginalized. This paradox highlights the urgent need for empirical inquiry into how gendered power relations shape food production and socioeconomic livelihoods at the household level. This study addresses this gap by focusing on female-headed households in Mbarara District, situating their lived realities within Uganda's SDG 5 commitments and the broader global struggle for gender equality in agriculture.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Uganda has made significant policy commitments toward advancing gender equality in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls). The 1995 Constitution guarantees equal rights for men and women, while the 1998 Land Act sought to enhance women's land tenure security. The National Gender Policy (2007; revised 2017) and development programs such as NAADS, Operation Wealth Creation, and the Parish Development Model have explicitly recognized female-headed households as critical beneficiaries of national development. These efforts align with SDG 5's emphasis on equal access to economic resources, technology, and decision-making, as well as SDG 2's focus on ending hunger and achieving food security.

Despite these strides, implementation gaps remain wide, and the benefits of SDG 5 are not evenly realized across households. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2024), 29.1% of households are headed by women, yet these households face higher levels of poverty (22% compared to the national average of 19%) and disproportionately high levels of multidimensional deprivation, with nearly 49% of female-headed households living in multidimensional poverty compared to 39% of male-headed households (UBOS, 2022). Female household heads face severe constraints in accessing land, with studies showing that only 30% have full ownership, while

nearly one-third have no control over land at all (Kes et al., 2011). This situation persists even though women, and particularly female household heads, contribute the bulk of agricultural labor and food production (Atukunda et al., 2021).

The challenge stems not only from material deprivation but also from gendered power relations that structure decision-making and resource allocation. While Uganda's legal and policy frameworks align with SDG 5, patriarchal norms embedded in land tenure systems, marriage practices, and community power structures continue to undermine the effectiveness of these reforms (Rwangire & Kabeba Muriisa, 2021). Consequently, female-headed households are trapped in cycles of limited access to productive resources, low agricultural productivity, and fragile socioeconomic livelihoods, despite being central to household food security. Existing studies in Uganda have examined aspects of women's land rights, credit access, and food security (e.g., Businge et al., 2018; Rwangire & Kabeba Muriisa, 2021; Donath et al., 2024). However, few have specifically interrogated the intersection of gendered power relations, food production, and socioeconomic livelihoods among female-headed households within the context of Uganda's SDG 5 commitments. Particularly in Mbarara District, where female-headed households are increasingly visible, there is limited empirical evidence on how global and national gender equality agendas translate into the lived realities of household survival and food production.

Therefore, the problem lies in the paradox that while Uganda has aligned itself with SDG 5 and SDG 2 and designed progressive gender policies, female-headed households continue to experience structural exclusion and persistent livelihood vulnerability. This study addresses this gap by examining how gendered power relations influence food production and socioeconomic livelihoods among female-headed households in Mbarara District, thereby contributing to Uganda's broader pursuit of the SDGs.

1.3 General Objective

To examine the relationship between gendered power relations, food production and socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

1. To examine how gendered power relations affect food production among female-headed households in Mbarara District.
2. To describe how gendered power relations affect the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District.
3. To determine the perceived effect of food production on socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How have gendered power relations affected food production among female-headed households in Mbarara District?
2. How have gendered power relations affected the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District?
3. What is the perceived effect of food production on socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District?

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study entailed the content scope, geographical scope and time scope as presented herein.

1.5.1 Content Scope

In this, gendered power relations refer to how a culture or society defines rights, responsibilities, and the identities of men and women about one another (Liu et al., 2017). Food production refers to the practice of growing crops and rearing animals among female-headed households (Nyamekye, 2015). Socioeconomic livelihoods refer to the skills, assets and actions needed for an individual to acquire a living and desirable means of life (Scoones, 2015a).

1.5.2 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in the Mbarara District of Southwestern Uganda. The area is surrounded by 5 districts including Sheema, Ibanda, Rwampara, Kiruhura and Buhweju. Mbarara District is composed of six sub-counties including Rwanyamahembe, Bukiiro, Kashare, Rubindi, Bubaare, Kagongi and Rubaya as well as Town Councils of Nyabisirira, Bwiizibwera, Bukiiro, Rwanyamahembe and Rubindi. The district headquarters is located at a distance of 290 kilometres by road, Southwest of Uganda's capital Kampala.

According to UBOS, Mbarara District had a population of 170,450 comprising of 90138 females and 84062 males within a total of 32961 households. Females constitute 52% while males constitute 48% and the growth rate average is 2.2 % which is lower than the national one of 3 percent. 0.3% households are headed by children between 10 to 17 years while 25.8 are headed by women equivalent to 8504 female headed households. Forty-seven point five of the population are below 18 years whereas 3.7% are above 65 years, implying that level of dependency in the district is 51.2%. The district has an illiteracy rate for the age 10 to 17 years at 13.6% (Government, 2021).

Mbarara District experiences tropic climate (hot and wet throughout the year, with average rainfall of about 1200mm and two rain season (Feb-May and Sept-Dec) each year. The topography is

largely plateau with gentle slopping hills and undulating plains covered in green savanna grassland and shrubs.

This district was chosen because evidence from the available studies by Busingye et al (2018), Nyakato et al (2020) and Rwangire and Muriisa (2021) point to the fact that there were challenges associated with gender power relations, food production and socioeconomic livelihoods of households headed by females in the neighbouring areas of Isingiro, Bushenyi and Mbarara City. The present study further investigated the extent to which these challenges interrelate.

1.5.3 Time Scope

The study considered a time scope of eight years i.e., from 2015 up to 2023 since this is the period when the Government of Uganda was implementing both National Development Plan II and III that involved an element of gender mainstreaming through inclusive growth premised on programs like Uganda Women Entrepreneurship under the Office of the President, Emyoga Program and Parish Development Model PDM. Whereas these programs did not directly answer the phenomenon at hand i.e., gendered power relations, food production and socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households, they to some extent aim at improving the households of the people in general among which are female-headed. Reference to the information on these programmes was imperative to this study in one way or the other. Thus, this time scope helped in connecting the dots regarding livelihood intervention spearheaded by National Development Plan strategies through policies and various initiatives, helping in suggesting new interventions for addressing the bottlenecks affecting female-headed households.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study on gendered power relations, food production and socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households is imperative in raising awareness of how gender inequalities affect economic activities like food production in the households and how this eventually affects the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households. The information generated will help in bridging research gaps left by researchers who conducted studies on a related theme. This will contribute to the body of literature and in effect, it will act as a point of reference for researchers and policymakers conducting action research aimed at designing policy interventions.

The study findings will help in tracing the position of Uganda as far as implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has gone. It should be noted that in 2015, the Government of Uganda joined the rest of the world in adopting the SDGs and propelling the aspirations of its citizens by achieving human rights, improving livelihoods and saving the environment from degradation. In this regard, Uganda started on a good note and by 2018, it was tending well toward achieving Goal 1 of reducing poverty as the economy was growing at 6%, but the COVID-19 pandemic has taken Uganda back (Nations, 2022). Around 20% of the population in Uganda is impacted by income poverty, however, about 42% are affected by multidimensional poverty(UBOS, 2022). Another indicator that Uganda is not doing well on SDG1, and indeed the findings from this study concur with the available findings. The current findings will help policymakers to capture data in Mbarara District and incorporate it into the rest of the country to design new strategies for the country to meet the SDG target by the year 2030.

Also, this study assessed food production which rhymes with SDG goal two about ending hunger. The findings pointed out that food production among female-headed households is affected by gendered power relations among female-headed households. The findings pointed out that when

decision-making is balanced with collaboration and females have access to resources, socioeconomic livelihoods are achieved and the reverse is true. The information provided by this study helps policymakers and researchers engage in action research in designing the most appropriate interventions for addressing hunger and food insecurity.

The study also pointed out underlying issues on gendered power relations among female-headed households and this feeds into SDG 5 about improving gender equality. The findings from this study revealed that a significant number of families in the Mbarara District are still locked in patriarchal arrangements where women are treated as a second sex. Whereas females are the heads of families among female-headed households, it was found that the power of control over resources is mainly in the extended family system where in-laws have control over how resources such as land are utilized. This compromises the ability of women to fully control resources and make important decisions in resource utilization while carrying out food production. The absence of control and the ability to make decisions have greatly compromised food production activities in most families. These findings are important pointers for policymakers and researchers in pursuit of designing interventions for addressing gender equality among female-headed households not only in Mbarara District but the rest of Uganda.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

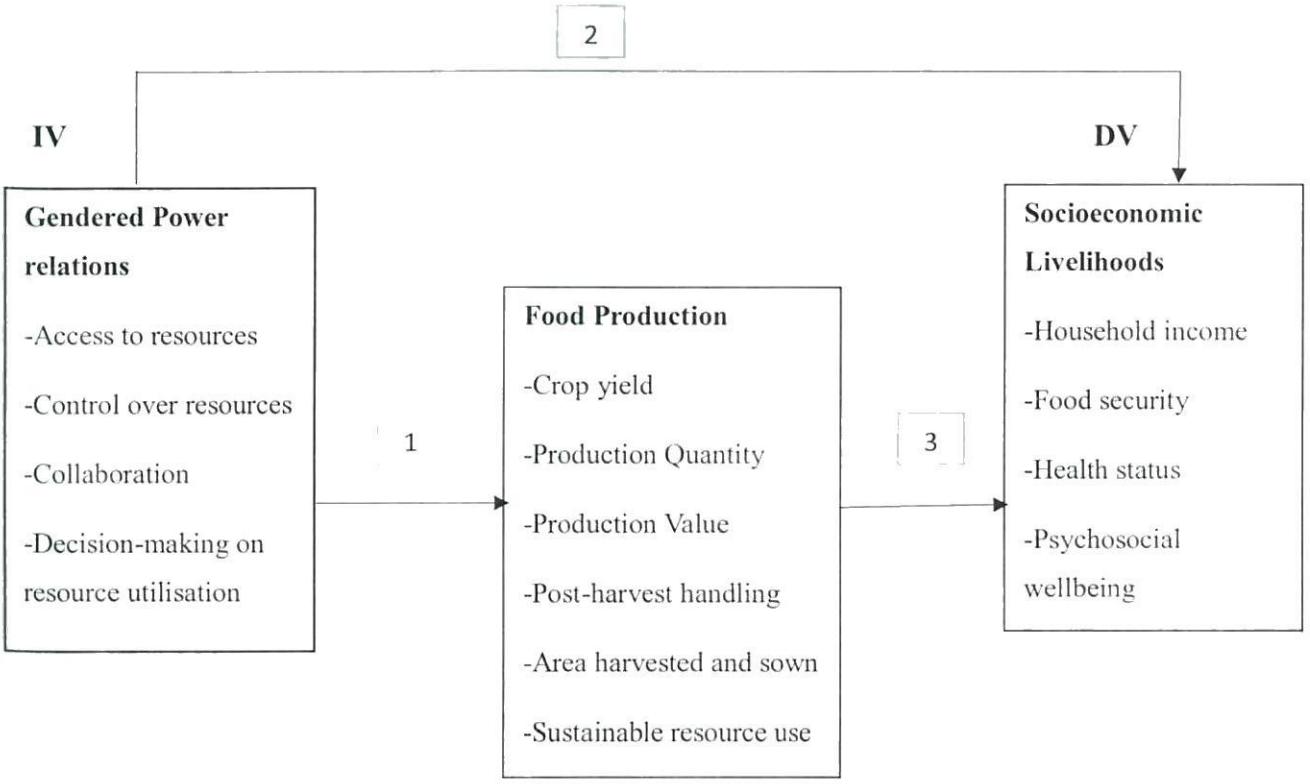


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Meinzen-Dick et al. (2011), Modified by the Researcher 2025.

This conceptual framework illustrates the interaction between the independent variables i.e., gendered power relations conceptualised in terms of access to resources, control over resources, collaboration as well as decision-making on resource utilisation. Food production in this aspect, was the mediating variable conceptualised in terms of crop yield, production quantity, production, value, post-harvest use handling, area harvested and sown, and sustainable resource use. The dependent variable was conceptualised in terms of household income, food security, health status, social well-being, emotional wellness, and social security. This conceptualisation shows how gendered power relations influence the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households

as moderated by food production. The structure shows how these variables were measured and tested with a specific focus on the Mbarara District.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The Sustainable Livelihood Approach, as advanced by Ian Scoones (1998), provides a framework for understanding how individuals and households mobilize resources to achieve sustainable well-being. According to Kogachi and Shaw (2023); Morse (2025); Natarajan et al. (2022); Tambe (2022), Sustainable Livelihood Approach emphasizes five core livelihood assets: human, social, natural, physical, and financial capital, which interact within a vulnerability context shaped by economic, social, and political structures. Studies by Mpuuga et al. (2021); Reddy (2025) reveal that for female-headed households, access to these assets is often constrained by systemic inequalities, particularly in patriarchal societies where land ownership, financial resources, and decision-making power are largely controlled by male-dominated structures(Scoones, 2015b). In Uganda, the patriarchal nature of household and community structures further restricts female heads' ability to accumulate and utilize livelihood assets effectively (Mpuuga et al., 2021; Ndagire, 2021a; Ndawula, 2016; Nyakato et al., 2020).

Raewyn Connell's Power Relations Theory (1987, 2002) provides a critical lens for examining how gendered power dynamics shape access to and control over livelihood resources. Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity highlights how societal norms privilege male dominance, reinforcing structural barriers for women in economic and social decision-making(Farias et al., 2023; Stergiou-Kita et al., 2017). In the context of female-headed households Nchanji et al. (2023); Zingwe et al. (2023) reports that power relations influence land tenure security, access to agricultural resources, and control over food production. Jabeen et al. (2020); Simon and Hasan (2025) add that even in households led by women, patriarchal structures often persist, limiting

their ability to make independent economic decisions. This dynamic is particularly evident in extended family settings where male relatives wield more power over household assets (Agarwal, 1998; Apollos & Tsedeke, 2025; Donath et al., 2024).

Sustainable Livelihood Approach and Power Relations Theory intersect in explaining the socioeconomic struggles of female-headed households. According to Sustainable Livelihood Approach, sustainable livelihoods require equitable access to livelihood assets (Morse, 2025; Scoones, 2015b; Tambe, 2022), yet Connell's Power Relations Theory reveals that systemic gender biases restrict women's control over these resources(Bermúdez Figueroa et al., 2023; Jewkes et al., 2015). For instance, female heads of households in Uganda frequently encounter land ownership challenges due to customary inheritance laws that favor male relatives (Andersson Djurfeldt, 2020; Garner et al., 2023). The UBOS Multidimensional Poverty Report (2022) further indicates that female-headed households face higher poverty rates (49%) than their male counterparts (39%), demonstrating the economic impact of power imbalances on livelihoods.

Food production is a key aspect of household sustainability under the Sustainable Livelihood Approach framework, yet gendered power relations heavily influence agricultural productivity (Natarajan et al., 2022; Njuki et al., 2023; Westholm & Ostwald, 2020). Studies by Bayu (2021); Midamba and Ouko (2024); Ndagire (2021a) show that female-headed households often have less access to agricultural inputs, credit, and extension services compared to male-headed ones. Connell's framework helps explain how gendered power hierarchies within agricultural institutions limit women's access to essential resources, reinforcing economic vulnerabilities (Bohren et al., 2024; Cook et al., 2021; Stewart et al., 2021). Furthermore, female heads must navigate traditional gender expectations, such as caregiving and domestic labor, which further

reduce the time and energy available for food production (Chance & Sardi Abdoul, 2025; Pyburn et al., 2023; Westholm & Ostwald, 2020)..

Social capital, another key component of Sustainable Livelihood Approach, is also shaped by power relations as reported by Morse (2025); Natarajan et al. (2022). Connell's theory highlights how male-dominated social networks exclude women from economic opportunities and decision-making spaces (Bermúdez Figueroa et al., 2023; Jewkes et al., 2015). In rural Uganda, women's access to financial services, cooperative societies, and leadership roles remains limited, affecting their ability to leverage social capital for economic resilience (Brogan & Dooley, 2024; Mubiinzi & Mutumba, 2025; Ndawula, 2016) . The exclusion of female heads from community-based agricultural initiatives further compounds their socioeconomic marginalization (Der Tambile et al., 2024; Nanyonjo & Nchanji, 2023), an issue that requires urgent intervention to address.

The impact of gendered power relations on livelihood diversification is another crucial aspect examined through Sustainable Livelihood Approach and Power Relations Theory (Habib et al., 2023; Natarajan et al., 2022; Oppong & and Bannor, 2022). While Sustainable Livelihood Approach emphasizes the importance of diversifying income sources for economic resilience (Habib et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2020; Scoones, 2015b), Connell's theory suggests that patriarchal norms constrain women's opportunities to engage in alternative economic activities (Jewkes et al., 2015; Kawarazuka et al., 2019; Mgumia, 2020). For example, in Uganda many female heads rely on subsistence farming rather than commercial agriculture due to restricted land rights and limited market access (Bamwesigye et al., 2020; Garner et al., 2023; Nakazawa, 2017). Moreover, informal employment opportunities available to women in Uganda often offer lower wages and less job security, exacerbating economic vulnerabilities (Contreras et al., 2024; Dorcas, 2023; Nuwematsiko et al., 2022).

The intersection of gendered power relations and external shocks further demonstrates the relevance of these theories. Sustainable Livelihood Approach underscores the vulnerability of female-headed households to economic and environmental shocks (Scoones, 2015b; Tambe, 2022; Wondimu et al., 2022), while Power Relations Theory explains how patriarchal structures exacerbate these vulnerabilities (Nosheen et al., 2023; Onwutuebe, 2019). During economic downturns or climate-related crises, male-controlled resource distribution often prioritizes male-headed households, leaving female-headed ones with fewer coping mechanisms (Andersson Djurfeldt, 2021; Djurfeldt, 2021; Mpuuga et al., 2021; Phuzi, 2021). This structural disadvantage reinforces the cycle of poverty, making it harder for women to achieve sustainable livelihoods.

In conclusion, integrating Scoones' Sustainable Livelihood Approach and Connell's Power Relations Theory provides a comprehensive understanding of the structural and systemic barriers affecting female-headed households. Sustainable Livelihood Approach highlights the necessity of access to key livelihood assets, while Power Relations Theory explains how patriarchal norms restrict this access, particularly in land ownership, financial resources, and food production. Addressing these gendered power imbalances is critical for promoting sustainable socioeconomic livelihoods among female-headed households in Uganda.

2.2 Gendered power relations and food production among female-headed households

A study by Ogwang (2023) on the effects of gender land ownership on food security and welfare in Uganda revealed that female secure land tenure system positively influences food security. This study was a desk review utilising a panel data survey considering the two waves of 2013-14, 2015-16 and 2018-19. This report lacks the originality touch that would have been gained from utilising primary data through surveys; however, this information serves as an eye-opener on the issue of gendered land ownership and food security at the household level. In this aspect, a study by

Mbabazia et al. (2018) on intra-household gender relations and their impact on access to agriculture extension services in Kabale District revealed that intra-household gender relations among the Bakiga are patriarchal in nature putting males in the superscript position. The study findings revealed that this compromises women's ability to execute farming activities yet they are the ones predominantly involved in agricultural activities. This study was entirely qualitative and did not measure the extent of the problem using statistical models to bring out precise conclusions and deductions about the subject matter. This makes these findings difficult to generalise on the entire population, however, it worked as an eye opener upon which the current study is based to examine gendered power relations and food production in the context of female-headed households with specific on Mbarara District of Southwestern Uganda.

On the issue of decision-making and farming, Mpiira et al. (2024) did a study on gender-specific decisions on technology adoption in farming in Central Uganda and found that gender composition of the household positively influenced technology adoption in farming. The findings further established that joint decision-making in the household influences the adoption of appropriate technology in farming. This was cross-sectional survey research involving 247 participants selected randomly from the districts of Nakaseke, Sembabule and Kiboga in Central Uganda. The study was purely quantitative and therefore missed out on the important aspects of people's perceptions, attitudes and practices as well as lived experiences in decision-making to adopt technologies in farming. On the contrary, another study by Albertson (2016) on the adoption of banana varieties in the Luwero and Mbarara districts of Uganda, considered the variable of gender in adoption and decision-making and established that gender was not statistically significant, however, the decision on adoption was statistically significant. This study had a numerical strength in terms of participants i.e., 598 participants selected from among banana farmers selected

randomly from both districts. In addition, the study used mixed methodology and therefore was able to capture both statistical and qualitative aspects regarding the adoption of new banana varieties in households looking at gender and the household head as predictors. These two studies were able to point out underlying issues to gender adoption of new technology, which the current study did not find out in the Mbarara District. This leaves a knowledge gap that will require a fresh inquiry by future scholars interested in this study.

A report by FAO (2022) reveals that there is a huge gender gap in agriculture at the household level in Uganda. The report detailed that the plots of land managed by women in farming produce 17% fewer harvests compared to those managed by their male counterparts. The findings attributed these gaps to bottlenecks and hurdles experienced by women in accessing factors and resources used in farming. A previous study by McKenna (2014) on the role of women in agriculture and food security at the household level in Uganda District, Eastern Uganda found that women are faced with several challenges that are premised on sociocultural norms that have greatly affected their ability to attain socioeconomic livelihoods in their homes. Besides, findings from these two studies did not spell out specific underlying issues affecting female-headed households and socioeconomic livelihoods therein. It only stopped at an overlay analysis of gender gaps in farming households giving a qualitative overview.

A study by Ndagire (2021b) on inequalities between female and male-headed households and food insecurity revealed that female-headed households were more food-constrained than male-headed ones. The findings in the same study reported that male-headed households had access to credit, and extension services, adopted climate-friendly farming practices and earned higher than their female-headed counterparts. Methodologically, this study used panel data surveyed from 3626 collected by Makere University between 2012 and 2014 in the Western and Northern regions of

randomly from both districts. In addition, the study used mixed methodology and therefore was able to capture both statistical and qualitative aspects regarding the adoption of new banana varieties in households looking at gender and the household head as predictors. These two studies were able to point out underlying issues to gender adoption of new technology, which the current study did not find out in the Mbarara District. This leaves a knowledge gap that will require a fresh inquiry by future scholars interested in this study.

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Uganda. The findings from the current study and Ndagire (2021b) study were in agreement. Though the two studies are separated by a time lag of ten years, the underlying issues are still persistent which calls for urgent attention from the stakeholders involved at both the research and policy levels.

A study by Ashagidigbi et al. (2017) on food security status of female headed households in rural Nigeria revealed that 59.1% of the households were food insecure. The study attributed this to marital status, age of household head, gender and household size among other sociodemographic factors. These findings corroborate with Ozioko et al. (2020) related study done in Enugu State, Nigeria which reported that a significant number of households were food insecure. The study reported that the meagre earnings they got from petty jobs done were all spent in buying. The study further reported high prevalence of poor nutrition and attributed all these to poverty. Similar findings were reported by Ndagire (2021a) in a study done in Northern and Southwestern Uganda, and reported that female headed households were more food constrained compared to their male counterparts. The study emphasized that if male households were subjected to similar conditions, food insecurity would increase by 13%. All these studies point to the fact that female headed households are at a disadvantage in terms of socioeconomic livelihoods and all these hooks to a point of factors related to gendered power relations in the home.

2.2 Gendered power relations and the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households

A study by Yimam (2014) on the livelihoods of female-headed households in Bati Warada, Ethiopia reported that the existence of a female head on the face of the family may influence the definition of a family, but in hindsight, there are always forces competing for the little resources including in-laws, uncles and a chain of other relatives in this setting. In many cultural settings

across Africa, female heads are made subordinate and not fully in charge of the resources of the family. On the other hand, a study by Nyathi (2018) explored the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Matabeleland in rural Zimbabwe and found that female-headed households had challenges related to access to credit facilities, inequalities in the labour market and also suffered food insecurity at household level. This study also utilised a qualitative research approach anchored on an epistemology research paradigm. Whereas this approach encourages rigour in data collection and analysis, it falls short of specificity in measuring the variables at hand. This therefore compromises the ability to generalise the findings on a wider population. The advantage is that the current study was able to gather quantifiable findings that were backed by qualitative findings, thus, bridging the gaps left by these studies.

Another study by Hegazi and Seyuba (2024) in rural Zambia examined the fate of female-headed households looking at livelihood diversification and food security and established that female-headed households are neglected in livelihood diversification. The findings pointed out that if livelihood diversification in agriculture is maintained and operationalized, it can help in improving household income and food security. This study was entirely qualitative involving 72 participants subjected to both interviews and Focus Group Discussions in two phases. Being qualitative makes it impossible to verify the extent of the problem at hand and also measure the causality. However, it is a good starting point for future studies to base on. Whereas livelihood diversification is an important aspect of socioeconomic livelihood, it was not captured in the current study and this leaves a knowledge gap that requires future research in the context of Uganda.

On access to finance, a study by Busingye et al. (2018a) on challenges faced by female-headed households in accessing finance from microfinance institutions in Southwestern Uganda, revealed that female heads of these households found it difficult to access finance from these institutions.

Busingye et al's study was conducted among 209 female heads of households in Mbarara and Ishaka-Bushenyi Municipalities using both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The only limitation of this study was on numerical strength of the sample size and other aspects of livelihoods beyond access to finance. The study could not tell whether these female households had other sources of finance beyond constraints faced in pursuit of finance from microfinance institutions. A related study was conducted in Ghana by Osei-Hwedie and Kurantin (2019) and revealed that finance obtained from microcredit institutions can help female heads of household reduce poverty to a certain extent but cannot entirely put poverty to an end. This is an indication that poverty which is a negative attribute of socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households has to be addressed using multiple approaches. In both Busingye et al. (2018a) and Osei-Hwedie and Kurantin (2019) the common underlying aspect is that women encounter challenges in accessing credit owing to a lack of collateral security because in most cases they have no control over property, especially land. The current study corroborated these findings and highlighted the case of a lack of control over land and productive assets by female heads of the family as the patriarchal arrangement does not allow this to happen. Future studies need to interrogate up to the tail and find a lasting solution to address this bottleneck.

On the health aspect, a study by Yoosefi Lebni et al. (2020) in Iran revealed that women encounter individual, intrafamilial and social problems that affect them psychologically, socially and economically. This causes them mainly health challenges that expose them to stigma, social isolation and reproductive health challenges (Yoosefi Lebni et al., 2020). The study was entirely qualitative and only centred on socio-cultural aspects affecting women's heads of households in Iran. This limits data to only qualitative aspects limiting the possibility of quantifying the findings to give decisive and well-measured attributes of the gathered data on the sociocultural factors

affecting female heads of the households. Relatedly, another study was done in Bangladesh by Habib (2015) and found that female heads of families from well-to-do backgrounds found no challenges taking care of their families, unlike their counterparts from poor backgrounds. The findings from this study indicated that the family background of a female head of the family had a bearing on whether she faced a challenge as a head of the family or not. This study was also qualitative making it impossible to generalize the findings to a bigger population. Though the two studies look distinctive, they give a glimpse of the underlying sociocultural aspects affecting female heads of households. The current study did not spell out this, however, the sociocultural aspects regarding the position of a female head on resource control and utilisation to attain the socioeconomic livelihood were brought out.

Another psychological aspect was the experience of humiliation by females/women in public especially the female heads of the families as revealed by a study done by Gholami and Jomeipour (2021) in Bader Lengeh, Iran. The findings from this study revealed that women heads of the households faced humiliation from communities. This was largely attributed to limited education, lack of capital, lack of spousal support among others. These findings are corroborated by Islam (2019) in Bangladesh which revealed that female headed households are hard pressed by limited resources compared to male headed households. The study attributed this to underlying societal aspects regarding male dominance in property ownership and impertinence. A related study by Yoosefi Lebni et al. (2020) complimented these challenges citing social discrimination, stigmatization, intra family problems, individual problems among other challenges that affect female heads of these families, thus affecting the entire family. Whereas these psychological problems have been highlighted in much of these studies, fewer studies have been done in the Uganda context. The presented study highlighted a few aspects in the qualitative aspect though did

not go into the details to unearth the underlying challenges. This calls for further studies to bring out a clear-cut picture on the psychological aspects that affect socioeconomic livelihoods of female headed households.

2.3 Food production and socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households

According to CFS (2017), women produce about 50% of the food in the world and about 60-80% of the food in the developing world with a workforce of about 43% in the developing world. Despite these efforts, women are faced with numerous challenges including resource constraints, discrimination and being treated as a secondary gender owing to patriarchal norms and customs in the global south (Lelea et al., 2022; Magambo & Nyamwesa, 2022; Makanga, 2022; Rehman et al., 2019). A study by Mahmoud and Daoud (2024) on the challenges and constraints faced by farmers on households food security done in the Sudan's state of Northern Kordofan revealed that 74.1% of the farmers suffered limited access to credit facilities whereas 88% did not have access to agriculture extension services. A related study by Nwaka et al. (2020) done in Nigeria revealed that women are faced with restrictions in access to land, low income levels and low levels of education affecting their capacity to succeed in food production as opposed to their counterparts male headed households. Studies in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia reveal that gender disparities in resource allocation contribute to lower agricultural productivity among women farmers compared to their male counterparts (FAO, 2011). Despite these barriers, female-headed households frequently employ adaptive strategies such as subsistence farming, small-scale trading, and community-based cooperatives to enhance food security (Quisumbing et al., 2014).

Socioeconomic factors further shape the livelihoods of female-headed households, with many relying on informal employment and social networks for survival. Research highlights that these households are more vulnerable to economic shocks due to lower income levels and limited

savings (Chant, 2016). In urban settings, women often engage in petty trade or domestic work, while in rural areas, they depend heavily on agriculture, albeit with fewer resources (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2019). Additionally, cultural norms and patriarchal structures often restrict women's decision-making power, exacerbating their economic marginalization (Agarwal, 2018). Policies aimed at improving access to education, microfinance, and land rights have been shown to enhance resilience among female-headed households (World Bank, 2020).

A study by Mtenga (2018) on the participation of households headed by females in small-scale farming and food security in Kikombo Ward, Dodoma revealed that these families encounter a myriad of challenges in farming owing to limited land and other factors of production. The findings showed that on average these families own two acres of land and yet the area experiences semi-arid conditions making it impossible to be productive to give adequate harvests for food security. On the other hand, an empirical analysis by Osabuohien et al. (2019) on the outcomes of females involved in agriculture in Tanzania revealed that large-scale agriculture investment had a negative association with the livelihoods of female-headed households. The females working in these estates earned less compared to those working outside. The two studies indicate that women are in a disadvantaged position pointing to the fact that female-headed households are not doing well in terms of agriculture and overall livelihoods. These findings are in agreement with the findings from the current study were found that females in the headship of the families in Mbarara have no absolute powers on farming activities due to extended family arrangement on land ownership and control of productive resources.

In Kenya, a study by Ndung'u (2016) on the challenges faced by women in food production at the household level revealed that cultural arrangements compromised from owning land and property like livestock even when they were the ones mainly responsible for taking care of farming activities

in the home. The findings further revealed that limited access to credit facilities owing to a lack of rights to own property that would be used as collateral affected their ability to invest in farming. A related study was done in Osun State Nigeria and reported that cultural norms and beliefs related to gender roles in farming and significant positive relationship with household food security (Adepoju et al., 2015). This study also utilized a mixed methodology approach with 240 participants, though higher than that of Kenya but too may not be adequate for generalization on a larger population. Where the two studies were able to bring out underlying aspects of gender in household food security other aspects of socioeconomic livelihoods such as household income, health status and psychosocial well-being among female-headed households have not been adequately tackled. The present study was able to capture these aspects from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives which gives a platform for future research endeavors to use it as a point of reference.

In a study, John Bosco and Matovu (2023) on the welfare of female-headed households in Kisoro district revealed that they enjoyed the advantage of labour doing farming activities owing to being large in an extended system setup. However, the same families suffered a lot of socioeconomic problems including acute lack of basic needs, early marriages, family instabilities, and school dropouts among others. The findings from the present study agree with John Bosco and Matovu (2023) on the challenges facing households headed by females when it comes to farming and its related livelihood outcomes. This calls for further studies to address these challenges of females in food production and access to socioeconomic livelihoods not only in Mbarara and Kisoro and the rest of the country.

Despite these challenges, evidence suggests that empowering female-headed households can significantly improve food security and socioeconomic outcomes. Programs that provide training

in sustainable farming techniques, financial literacy, and market access have demonstrated positive impacts (Njuki et al., 2021). Furthermore, social protection schemes, such as cash transfers and food subsidies, have been effective in reducing poverty and malnutrition in these households (Gentilini et al., 2020). A growing body of literature emphasizes the need for gender-responsive policies that address structural inequalities and promote women's autonomy in agriculture and economic participation (UN Women, 2022). Future research should explore intersectional approaches that consider how class, ethnicity, and rural-urban divides further influence the livelihoods of female-headed households.

2.4 Gaps in Literature

This study examined gendered power relations, food production and socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District of Southwestern Uganda. Studies done in Uganda and the rest of the world mainly looked at intrahousehold gender dynamics and socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households. The studies that attempted to spell out food production only focused on the issue of food security neglecting other aspects of socioeconomic livelihoods like household income, health, and psychosocial well-being which the current study intended to address(Mtenga, 2018; Ndagire, 2021b). In addition, studies by Mpiira et al. (2024); (Msofi Mgalamadzi et al., 2024; Ndung'u, 2016; Pierotti et al., 2022) focused on decision-making in the process of food production and how this affects socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households. Other studies examined property ownership and how it affects farming and food production with minimal touch on the overall socioeconomic livelihood as the outcome variable(Ogwang, 2023; Ondere et al., 2024; Osei-Hwedie & Kurantin, 2019; Rwangire & Kabeba Muriisa, 2021; Staal, 2019). The present study brings out the entire spectrum of how gendered

power relations within the home influence the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in the Mbarara District.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Philosophy

This study was anchored in the pragmatist paradigm, which provided the most suitable lens for investigating complex social realities such as gendered power relations, food production, and socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households. Unlike positivism, which privileges objective quantification, or interpretivism, which emphasizes subjective meanings, pragmatism acknowledges the value of both and allows methodological pluralism guided by research objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The study adopted a relativist-practical ontology, recognizing that social reality is multiple and context-dependent. Gendered power relations and livelihoods are not fixed entities but are experienced differently by female-headed households depending on cultural norms, access to resources, and institutional structures. At the same time, these experiences generate observable patterns that can be quantified. Thus, reality in this study was seen as both subjective (lived experiences of female household heads) and objective (measurable indicators of poverty, land access, and food production).

Epistemology concerns how knowledge is generated and validated. The study adopted a transactional and pluralistic epistemology, consistent with pragmatism. Knowledge was understood as arising from both empirical observations e.g., statistical relationships between land access and livelihoods and interpretive understanding e.g., narratives of how cultural norms shape household decision-making. This epistemological stance justified the integration of surveys to capture generalizable patterns and in-depth interviews to capture contextual meanings. The ontological and epistemological assumptions shaped both the research approach and methods. The mixed methods design emerged naturally from the pragmatist stance whereby quantitative methods

enabled the researcher to measure and test associations between gendered power relations, food production, and socioeconomic livelihoods whereas qualitative methods allowed for interpretation of lived experiences and institutional perspectives that numbers alone could not capture. Ultimately, this philosophical grounding ensured that the study findings were not only statistically valid but also socially meaningful for female-headed households and policymakers alike.

3.2 Research Approach

The study employed a mixed methods approach, guided by Creswell (2023). Mixed methods are not merely a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, but rather a distinct research approach that systematically integrates the two to strengthen validity and enrich interpretation

This methodological triangulation was essential for validating findings and offering a holistic understanding of the complex interplay between gendered power relations, food security, and economic well-being in Mbarara District.

The choice of mixed methods was directly linked to the study objectives:

1. **Objective 1** (to examine the influence of gendered power relations on food production in female-headed households): Required quantitative data through structured household surveys to statistically measure relationships between variables.
2. **Objective 2** (to assess the impact of food production on the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households): Required quantitative data to establish measurable associations.
3. **Objective 3** (to explore contextual and institutional perspectives on gendered power relations and livelihoods): Required qualitative data from in-depth interviews with district leaders and CSO representatives to capture policy, cultural, and institutional dimensions.

The study adopted an Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), where quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis. The qualitative strand was specifically designed to explain, expand, and contextualize the initial quantitative results.

3.3 Research Design

A cross-sectional descriptive design was employed, enabling the collection of data at a single point in time (Wang & Cheng, 2020). This design was appropriate because it allowed the study to capture a snapshot of gendered power dynamics, food production, and livelihoods among female-headed households without requiring long-term follow-up. The design integrated both structured household surveys for quantitative data and in-depth interviews for qualitative data, consistent with the concurrent mixed methods framework.

3.4 Study Population

The study population comprised of Female-headed households in Mbarara District (N = 8,504: NDPIII, 2020). They were the core respondents because they hold the lived experiences of gendered power relations, food production, and livelihoods. Secondary population (key informants) oncluding District leaders (Probation and Community Development Officers) and representatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working with women and household livelihoods. These were included to provide contextual and expert perspectives but were not the central unit of analysis.

3.5 Sampling

A two-stage sampling procedure was used whereby for female-headed households, the sampling frame was obtained from sub-county offices. Using Yamane's (1967) formula with N = 8,504 and e = 0.05, the sample size was determined as 186 households. Systematic random sampling was

applied, with every 20th household selected. This ensured representativeness and minimized selection bias. For the key informants, District leaders and CSO representatives were selected purposively based on their knowledge and engagement in community development and gender-related programming. Their sample size was determined by data saturation (Saunders et al., 2018), which was reached at 10 interviews. Thus, the total sample size was 196 respondents (186 household heads plus 10 key informants).

3.6 Sample Size Determination

The study arrived at sample size using a sample size determination formula by Yamane (1973) as expressed herein:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N \cdot e^2}$$

Where;

n= required sample size

N = population size (3,673 female-headed households)

e = margin of error (assumed 5%, or 0.05 for a 95% confidence level)

$$n = \frac{N \cdot Z^2 \cdot p(1-p)}{(N-1) \cdot e^2 + Z^2 \cdot p(1-p)}$$

$N = 8,504, Z = 1.96, p = 0.5, e = 0.07$:

n= 186.

Thus, the sample size is approximately **186.**

On the other hand, the sample size for key informants was determined at the point of saturation as emphasized by (Alam, 2021; Hossain et al., 2024; Saunders et al., 2018). This is an approach in qualitative research where the researcher uses judgmental analysis to determine that the data being collected has reached a break-off point. In other words, the participants begin to repeat what other

participants have already mentioned and no new ideas are being generated through interviews or Focus Group Discussions.

Response Rate

Respondent Category	Sample size	Response rate	Percent (%)
Female household heads	186	186	100
Key Informants	15	10	66.7
Total	201	196	97.5

Source: Primary data, 2023

The response rate in this study was 97.5% out of 201 respondents for both quantitative and qualitative participants.

3.7 Data Collection

3.7.1 Methods of Data Collection

Two main data collection methods were employed:

Structured Household Survey (Quantitative): Administered through a standardized questionnaire to 186 female-headed households. The questionnaire was designed with closed-ended Likert-scale questions, enabling statistical measurement of gender relations, food production, and livelihood indicators. Trained enumerators conducted face-to-face administration in Runyankore to accommodate literacy variations.

In-depth Interviews (Qualitative): Conducted with 10 purposively selected key informants using an interview guide. The guide focused on themes of gendered power relations, institutional support, and livelihood strategies. With consent, interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and

translated for analysis. This dual-method approach enabled complementarity: the survey captured patterns and relationships, while interviews provided depth and explanatory narratives.

3.8 Data Quality Control

3.8.1 Validity

Expert judgment was employed to verify the validity of the instruments prior to enrollment into the field for data collection in accordance to guidelines set by Fernández-Gómez et al. (2020). Five experts were approached from the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies of Mbarara University of Science and Technology to rate the instruments including three lecturers and two PhD students. The experts rated each item as either relevant or not relevant. Validity was determined using the Content Validity Index (CVI) in line with Almanasreh et al. (2019). CVI=Items rated relevant by both judges divided by the total number of items in the questionnaire as shown here.

$$CVI = \frac{\text{No. Of items rated relevant}}{\text{Total no. of items}}$$

The rated items were coded and entered into SPSS version 21 to determine CVI, and the average was above 0.7 an indication that the instrument was reliable.

The validity of qualitative data was ensured by establishing the three constructs of credibility, transferability and dependability as described by Ahmed (2024). In this regard, (Liao & Hitchcock, 2018) credibility was ensured by observing the believability and trustworthiness of the findings as put forward by the participants. In addition, Cambon et al. (2012); Drisko (2024) defined transferability was achieved by observing the degree to which the findings of the research can be transferred to other contexts by the reader. Whereas dependability was achieved by identifying whether the findings can be collaborated or confirmed by others who examine the data, and then

confirm that no inappropriate biases would impact the data analysis (Ahmed, 2024; Kuper et al., 2008). Dependability was ensured by conducting an inquiry audit which involved the researcher outside of the data collection and data analysis to examine the processes of data collection, data analysis, and the results of the research study to confirm and ensure the accuracy of the findings in line with Amin et al. (2020) guidelines.

3.8.2 Reliability

The research instruments were pretested among 10 female-headed households in Mbarara City, a setting with similar socioeconomic characteristics but outside the study area. This ensured that the pretest population was distinct from the actual respondents, avoiding data contamination (Hilton, 2017). Feedback from the pretest was used to refine the clarity, cultural sensitivity, and sequencing of questions. Reliability was tested through Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded coefficients above 0.7 for all major constructs, confirming internal consistency (Izah et al., 2024).

The reliability of qualitative data was ensured by conformability as stated by Singh et al. (2021). According to Hadi and José Closs (2016); Levy (2006), conformability in qualitative research means the degree to which the outcomes could be confirmed or corroborated by other people. This was achieved by auditing the findings by an outside researcher to confirm that no inappropriate biases impacted the data analysis as emphasized by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2012).

Table 3.1: Validity and Reliability Results

Variables	CVI	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient	No. of Items
Gendered power relations	0.83	0.732	17
Food production	0.76	0.820	12
Socioeconomic livelihoods	0.91	0.715	7

3.12 Data Processing and Analysis

Data analysis followed the concurrent triangulation design as described herein:

Quantitative data were coded and analyzed using SPSS v21. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies) described patterns, while inferential tests (Pearson correlation, regression, and ANOVA) examined associations and mediation effects.

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2017). Transcripts were coded, themes identified, and narratives compared against quantitative findings. The two datasets were then integrated at the interpretation stage through joint displays and narrative comparison (Guetterman et al., 2021), allowing convergence, divergence, or complementarity of findings to be highlighted.

3.13 Ethical Consideration

This study was cleared by the Mbarara University Research Ethics Committee (MUST-REC) and the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST). Also, permission to conduct a study in Mbarara District among female-headed households was obtained from the Chief Administrative Officer, of Mbarara District. This opened up a phase in which the researcher began to make appointments with participants in different sub-counties and town councils.

After securing appointments with the participants, the research team embarked on field surveys to meet these participants as suggested by Xu et al. (2020). Participants were taken through a written informed consent written by Runyankore that explained the purpose of the study, the rights of the participants, confidentiality, privacy and protection of individual participants. Those who agreed with the written informed consent were made to sign or put a thumbprint in agreement. This was followed by a face-to-face interaction between the Research Assistant and the participant, as participants responded to questions in the questionnaire and the interview guide.

During the data collection phase, the research teams used pseudonyms on the questionnaires and informed consent as well as keeping them under lock and key to avoid exposing the privacy of the participants as emphasized by Nunan (2021). In addition, during transcribing and report writing the names of the participants were not written anywhere. In using secondary data sources, where works of other people have been used, in-text citations and references have been provided as reported by Santini (2018).

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

In this study, sex, age, education, marital status, number of people in the household, and land ownership were the main demographic characteristics considered. Results on this are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Per cent
Age		
18-30	20	10.8
31-40	48	25.8
41-50	64	34.4
51+	54	29
Education		
Primary	142	76.3
High school	35	18.8
Tertiary	6	3.2
University graduate	3	1.6
Land Ownership		
Yes	167	89.8
No	19	10.2
Total	186	100

Source: Primary Data, 2023

Results from Table 4.2 indicate that the majority of the respondents 34.4% belonged to the age group between 41-50 years. This was followed by 29% of the respondents who belonged to the

age group 51 years and above. The results show that a significant number of female heads of households are above 40 years. This is largely attributed to the fact that the life expectancy of females is higher than that of males in Uganda at 51 for females versus 47 for males as reported by the World Bank (WB, 2023). A report by Djuikom and Walle (2018) reported that 72% of female heads of households in Africa are widows.

Findings also show that the majority of the respondents 76.3% had a primary level of education, followed by 18.8% who had a secondary level of education whereas the least 1.6% were university graduates. This corroborates with a report by Afrobarometer (2024) that women face inequality in education with a 49% chance of failing to progress to the secondary level versus 39% on the side of men. This is supported by a previous report by UBOS (2012), which showed that 40% of female households had no formal education.

Finally, on land ownership, 89.2% of the respondents owned land compared to 10.8% who reported not owning land. This is way above the national average of 30% for female land ownership as reported by (Ogwang, 2023; Rwangire & Kabeba Muriisa, 2021; Series, 2019). It should be noted that land ownership is a significant determinant of food production and socioeconomic livelihoods among female-headed households as reported by Mason et al. (2015); Mpuuga et al. (2021); Nyakato et al. (2020).

4.1.1 Association Between Sociodemographic Variables, Gendered Power Relations, Food Production, and Socioeconomic Livelihood

This subsection presents the relationship between selected sociodemographic characteristics of respondents, namely age, education level, and land ownership and the three core study variables of gendered power relations, food production, and socioeconomic livelihoods. The analysis provides mean scores and corresponding p-values to determine the extent to which these background variables influence the dynamics under investigation. Results are summarized in Table 4.3.

Socio-demographics	Mean Gendered Power Relations	Mean Food Production	Mean Socioeconomic Livelihoods	P-value
Age	3.43	3.49	3.63	0.0
Education	3.41	3.46	3.56	0.0
Land Ownership	3.59	3.68	3.71	0.0

Source: Primary data, 2023

The analysis of age indicated a mean score of 3.43 for gendered power relations, 3.49 for food production, and 3.63 for socioeconomic livelihoods, with a statistically significant p-value of 0.042. These results suggest that as respondents advance in age, there is a moderate but meaningful improvement in their ability to negotiate power relations, engage in food production, and secure better livelihood outcomes. Older respondents appeared to draw on greater experience and resilience, which contributed to relatively stronger socioeconomic well-being.

Education also revealed a consistent positive effect across the three constructs, with mean scores of 3.41 for gendered power relations, 3.46 for food production, and 3.56 for socioeconomic livelihoods, and a significant p-value of 0.031. This demonstrates that education enhances knowledge, decision-making capacity, and access to resources, which in turn improve agricultural

productivity and household livelihood outcomes. Respondents with higher levels of education reported greater agency in decision-making and better ability to utilize available opportunities for both production and income generation.

Land ownership produced the highest mean values across all constructs, 3.59 for gendered power relations, 3.68 for food production, and 3.71 for socioeconomic livelihoods, with a highly significant p-value of 0.017. These findings underscore the critical importance of land as a structural resource that determines the extent of empowerment, production potential, and economic well-being. Households with secure land ownership had better control over resources, more stable food production, and enhanced livelihood outcomes compared to those without.

While age and education significantly influenced the three study constructs, land ownership emerged as the most powerful determinant. This emphasizes that structural factors such as control of productive assets and human capital elements like education are central to improving gender equity, food security, and socioeconomic resilience in female-headed households.

4.2 How gendered power relations have affected food production among female-headed households

In order to understand how gendered power relations have affected food production among female-headed households, participants were asked to give their views and opinions on how gendered power relations have affected food production among female-headed households using items rated on a five-level Linkert scale. The elicited results in this section are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: How gendered power relations have affected food production among female-headed households

Statements	Response rate (Frequency/Percent)						
	SD (1)	D (2)	NS (3)	A (4)	SA (5)	Mean	Std.
Females have access to land for food production	75 (40.3%)	42 (22.6%)	0 (0.0%)	50 (26.9%)	19 (10.2%)	2.80	.240
Females greatly mobilize resources like planting materials	10 (5.4%)	18 (9.7%)	0 (0.0%)	65 (34.9%)	93 (50%)	2.77	.287
My old male children are the ones who decide where/how I should use the land	8 (4.3%)	19 (10.2%)	0 (0.0%)	159 (85.5%)	0 (0.0%)	3.97	.930
Females have control over resources in food production	28 (15.1%)	115 (61.8%)	0 (0.0%)	43 (23.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2.57	.287
My in-laws are the ones who decide where crops should be grown and which crops to grow.	10 (5.4%)	29 (15.6%)	0 (0.0%)	64 (34.4%)	83 (44.6%)	3.90	.901
Females in this household collaborate with males in food production	57 (30.6%)	56 (30.1%)	0 (0.0%)	73 (39.2%)	0 (0.0%)	2.48	.287
Both females and males are actively involved in land preparation for food production in our household.	28 (15.1%)	64 (34.4%)	0 (0.0%)	64 (34.4%)	30 (16.1%)	3.98	.795
Females are more involved in all stages of food production than men	8 (4.3%)	37 (19.9%)	0 (0.0%)	85 (45.7%)	56 (30.1%)	1.77	.203
Crop growing is to females as animal husbandry is to males in our household	83 (44.6%)	75 (40.3%)	9 (4.8%)	10 (5.4%)	9 (4.8%)	1.03	.254
Females participate in land use planning more than males.	111 (59.7%)	47 (25.3%)	19 (10.2%)	9 (4.8%)	0 (0.0%)	2.25	.194
Females compared to their male counterparts determine food for sale and food for home consumption.	101 (54.3%)	37 (19.9%)	10 (5.4%)	9 (4.8%)	29 (15.6%)	3.86	.864
Females do not have a say on what crops to grow or what livestock to keep in the household.	9 (4.8%)	104 (55.9%)	10 (5.4%)	37 (19.9%)	26 (14%)	2.54	.278
Total Scores						**33.92**	**5.52**

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The findings in Table 4.3 reveal significant barriers to land access among female-headed households, with 40.3% strongly disagreeing that women have access to land for food production, highlighting systemic exclusion, while only 10.2% strongly agreed, indicating severe scarcity. The intermediate 26.9% agreement suggests some conditional or limited access, possibly due to borrowed land or regional variations, though the low strongly agree rate confirms persistent constraints. These disparities reflect broader structural inequities, such as patriarchal land tenure systems and economic barriers, which undermine food security and perpetuate poverty cycles

among female-headed households. Compared to global data where women own just 15% of agricultural land in Sub-Saharan Africa (Apollos & Tsedeke, 2025; FAO, 2018), this study's findings suggest an even more acute local gap, demanding urgent policy interventions like legal reforms, awareness campaigns, and targeted support programs to ensure women's land rights and socio-economic empowerment. Without addressing these barriers, female-headed households will remain disproportionately vulnerable to food insecurity and economic marginalization, necessitating immediate action from policymakers and community stakeholders.

The study found that while a majority of respondents (50.0%) strongly agreed that females play a significant role in mobilizing resources for food production including securing planting materials and an additional 34.9% agreed, a small but notable proportion (5.4%) strongly disagreed, indicating variability in perceptions or experiences. This lack of full consensus suggests potential disparities in resource mobilization among female-headed households, possibly due to socioeconomic constraints, limited access to credit, or gendered institutional barriers. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions, such as improved access to agricultural inputs and financial services, to strengthen women's capacity in sustaining household food production. The argument was supported through in-depth interviews in which one of the participants had this to say;

> In this community, it is less likely to find males involved in farming. Most men especially the youths are in other activities like boda boda riding, brick making and petty trading. Farming has been left in the hands of women in most of these households. For that matter, females are in charge of ensuring that resources necessary for food production are in place, of which resources are not readily available. And by the way, this has not started today, it has been traditionally like that, as we were growing, men would undertake complex activities like looking after the animals, construction and going out to look for employment as women did the household chores including farming. (KI 006)

These views concur with the statistics gathered here confirming that most men in Mbarara District are not much involved in farming activities at the household level. These findings concur with anthropological studies that have elaborated the patriarchal arrangement relating to gender roles in the home, where cultivation is defined as a female gender role. Despite the efforts of the gender mainstreaming movement, these issues persist in this society.

The study revealed a strong patriarchal pattern in land ownership and decision-making, with an overwhelming majority of respondents (85.5%) agreeing that male heirs predominantly control land utilization. A smaller proportion (10.2%) disagreed, while only 4.3% strongly opposed this notion, reinforcing deeply entrenched gender disparities in resource inheritance. These findings align with sociological literature highlighting the persistence of male-dominated land tenure systems, where women's rights to inherit and autonomously manage land remain contested. The near-consensus among respondents underscores systemic resistance to gender-inclusive land ownership, reflecting broader sociocultural norms that marginalize women in agricultural decision-making. Addressing these inequities requires legal reforms, community sensitization, and policies promoting women's land rights to challenge patriarchal structures in resource governance. This was emphasized by one of the participants who had this to say;

> In most female-headed households, when adult sons grow, they assume the position previously held by their fathers. The mother cannot make any decision in the home without consulting them especially if it includes anything to do with land and other assets like livestock. The situation becomes clear if the boys are educated and have some reasonable higher social status. They become in charge of everything and the mother only implements their decisions. (KI 002)

These views show that most families in this area are still locked in the traditional practice where males enjoy a superscript position in the household and dominate decision-making on the utilization of resources. What is clear here is that females no matter the position they are treated as a secondary gender in the affairs of managing resources in the home.

The study reveals significant gender disparities in resource control for food production, with a majority of participants (61.8%) rejecting the notion that women have decision-making power over agricultural resources. While 23.1% acknowledged some degree of female control, a substantial minority (15.1%) strongly opposed this perspective, indicating entrenched resistance to women's autonomy in resource management. These findings demonstrate that women in Mbarara District face systemic barriers in exercising control over production resources, reinforcing gender-based inequalities in agricultural households. Such constrained access to productive assets not only undermines women's agricultural productivity but also perpetuates socioeconomic vulnerabilities among female-headed households. The persistent imbalance in resource governance calls for targeted gender-sensitive policies, including land rights reforms and women's empowerment programs, to address structural inequities in agricultural production systems.

The findings reveal a tension between nuclear family autonomy and extended family influence in agricultural decision-making, with 50% of participants strongly rejecting in-laws' control over crop selection and cultivation sites, while a notable minority (5.4%) strongly affirmed this practice. This duality reflects the transitional nature of agricultural governance in Mbarara District, where traditional patriarchal kinship systems persist alongside modern individualistic approaches, corroborating anthropological theories of Africa's patrilineal resource control. The coexistence of these opposing views suggests an incomplete shift in decision-making power, with extended family influence remaining relevant in some households despite broader trends toward nuclear family autonomy. These results highlight the need for nuanced analysis of intra-familial power dynamics in agricultural production systems.

The study reveals limited gender collaboration in household-level food production, with only 39.2% of participants acknowledging cooperative efforts between males and females, while a

substantial 30.1% reported no collaboration whatsoever. These findings indicate suboptimal cooperation levels that fall short of the necessary threshold for meaningful socioeconomic improvement, while simultaneously highlighting persistent gender-based disparities in agricultural labor dynamics. The data suggest that entrenched inequalities continue to hinder effective partnership in food production activities, ultimately constraining household productivity and livelihood enhancement opportunities. This pattern underscores the need for targeted interventions to promote equitable gender participation and shared decision-making in agricultural households to foster more sustainable and inclusive food production systems.

The study indicates moderate levels of gender-inclusive participation in agricultural activities, with 34.4% of respondents affirming collaboration between males and females across all stages of food production. However, a notable proportion (15.1%) strongly denied the existence of such cooperation, revealing significant disparities in household-level farming practices. While these results demonstrate some degree of shared agricultural labor, the persistent disagreement among a substantial minority suggests that gender-segregated roles remain prevalent in many households. This partial collaboration falls short of the optimal partnership needed to enhance agricultural productivity and gender equity, reflecting underlying sociocultural norms that may limit women's involvement in certain production phases. The findings underscore the need for community-based interventions to promote more equitable and efficient joint farming practices.

The study reveals a pronounced gender imbalance in agricultural labor, with 45.7% of participants confirming women's predominant involvement across all stages of food production, compared to only 4.3% who strongly contested this view. This overwhelming female participation without proportional control over resources or decision-making undermines the potential benefits of equitable gender collaboration in farming. Such skewed labor dynamics, compounded by women's

limited resource ownership (as established in previous findings), creates a counterproductive cycle that stifles agricultural productivity and household socioeconomic advancement. The persistent feminization of agricultural labor without corresponding empowerment measures perpetuates systemic inefficiencies that demand urgent policy attention. Current imbalance negates potential productivity gains from gender-inclusive teamwork. These views are in agreement with views obtained from the interviews in which one of the participants had this to say;

> In as much as when the head of the family (male) dies, the widow automatically takes over, the rights to control everything are limited. For instance, in most families, she can't sell or do major developments on the land like commercial agriculture without the knowledge of the extended family. This happens until the male sons grow and take over from their father. (KII 010)

Tracing views from this statement, women's right to own property especially land and other resources is subject to many strings according to traditional arrangements. In such a scenario, female-headed families will find a bottleneck regarding land utilization in food production, and this affects the family's socioeconomic livelihoods in the long run. Until this arrangement is dismantled, female-headed households will remain grappling with inadequate socioeconomic livelihoods as reported by Ogwang (2023).

The study reveals significant contradictions in perceptions of female participation in land use planning within female-headed households. While 39.2% of respondents acknowledged women's leadership in this domain, a combined 60.7% (30.6% strongly disagreeing + 30.1% disagreeing) contested this view, indicating prevailing skepticism about women's decision-making autonomy in agricultural land management. This polarization highlights systemic gender asymmetries in resource governance, where even in female-headed households, cultural norms or institutional barriers may constrain women's effective control over land use decisions. This eventually affects food security outcomes, optimization of productive resources as well as adoption of innovative

farming techniques. This corroborates with views from the interviews in which one of the participants was quoted saying;

> Land use planning here largely rests in the hands of the male gender creating a challenge of inequalities in the homes. Even when the female is the household head, she consults the sons and if they are still young, she consults the in-laws and other male relatives before undertaking the activity. We found this arrangement being practiced by our forefathers and nothing has changed in modern times. I am not sure whether I will ever see changes regarding female control of resources in my lifetime. (KI 003)

The finding reveals a deeply entrenched system of patriarchal control over land and resources, which persists despite modern times and even in households where women are nominally the heads. It highlights the difference between a formal title e.g., *female-headed household* and the reality of decision-making power, which remains firmly in the hands of men. Another participant had the same view and was quoted saying;

> Even when the head of the family is a woman, it is difficult to command respect from the entire family and make decisive decisions on land utilization especially when the sons are over 18 years old. She must consult children before choosing what to do on land, this doesn't happen in male-headed households. It is culturally designed like this. (KI 008)

This finding underscore how culturally ingrained patriarchy systematically undermines female authority, revealing that even a woman's formal position as household head is insufficient to grant her autonomous decision-making power over land. The necessity to consult her adult sons—a requirement not imposed on male heads exposes a disparity where her authority is conditional and subject to male approval, not inherent. This cultural design actively perpetuates a hierarchy that disempowers women, ensuring that true control over critical resources like land remains a male-dominated domain, regardless of the official household structure.

> Culturally, when a man dies, the kinsmen remain with a say on his property. Though it is virtually known that the property belongs to the wife and his children, the extended family plays a key role in controlling the affairs of this family. (KI 003)

This statement reveals a critical mechanism of patriarchal control that extends beyond the nuclear family, highlighting how the extended family, or "kinsmen," acts as a collective enforcer of cultural norms to maintain authority over property after a man's death. While there is a nominal acknowledgment that the property rightfully belongs to the widow and her children ("virtually known"), this moral understanding is overruled by a culturally sanctioned system that grants the wider male lineage formal "say" and control. This practice effectively disempowers the widow, transforming her from a rightful owner into a provisional caretaker whose decisions are subject to the approval of male relatives. It frames the nuclear family's assets not as their private property but as a clan asset, thereby ensuring that economic power and the patrilineal inheritance of land remain under the control of the broader male-dominated kinship structure, perpetuating a cycle of dependency and inequality for women. In this regard, one of the participants had this to say;

> When the male head dies, the extended family members tend to elect one of their own as the overseer of the property of the deceased son of theirs. In this aspect, this strips authority from the female head. This happens until the oldest son grows to fit in the shoes of his father and continue his legacy. (KI 009)

This finding confirms that the patriarchal practices that were against women's inheritance of family resources still live in communities of Mbarara district. And this depicts what happens among the female-headed households regarding property ownership, and utilization and its subsequent effect on socioeconomic livelihoods. These findings from the participants indicate the existence of barriers and limitations towards women's secure rights on property ownership and utilization. In effect, this has a bearing on the overall utilization, control and overall socioeconomic livelihood, especially in situations where they are overall providers of the families.

The findings demonstrate the enduring influence of patriarchal norms in agricultural labor division, with 44.6% of participants strongly agreeing that crop cultivation remains female-dominated while animal husbandry is male-preserved - a traditional gender role allocation contested by only 5.4% of respondents. This persistent segregation reflects generational reinforcement of gendered agricultural roles that limit cross-skilling, perpetuate resource control disparities (as livestock

typically holds greater economic value), and constrain household adaptive capacity. The near-universal acceptance of this dichotomy underscores how deeply customary practices naturalize gender-differentiated labor, necessitating targeted interventions like gender-transformative extension programs and asset redistribution initiatives to disrupt these entrenched patterns and enhance both equity and agricultural productivity. This finding agrees with the view obtained through interviews in which one of the participants was quoted saying;

> Traditionally, males take care of animals as women go for crop farming. This has defined gender roles at the household level among the Banyankore from time immemorial. We found it like that, though, modernization is trying to change things, but we still know this, and it is still a practice here. (KI 006)

The account highlights the enduring influence of cultural traditions in defining gender roles within Banyankore households. The division of labor men caring for animals and women engaging in crop farming is portrayed as a long-standing norm, deeply embedded in community identity and practices. Although modernization is gradually challenging these traditional arrangements, the persistence of such roles demonstrates the resilience of cultural systems in shaping household dynamics and livelihood strategies. This continuity reflects both stability and constraint: while it provides structure to household labor organization, it also reinforces rigid gender roles that may limit adaptability in the face of socioeconomic change.

The study reveals a significant disparity in post-harvest decision-making authority, with 55.9% of participants disputing women's autonomy in determining the allocation of crops for household consumption versus market sale, contrasted by only 4.8% who strongly rejected this inequitable dynamic. This evidence demonstrates that while women bear substantial responsibility for agricultural production, their agency diminishes at the critical harvest control stage, a transition of power typically favoring male actors within extended family structures. Such constrained decision-making capacity generates multidimensional consequences: (1) it perpetuates patriarchal resource

governance systems, (2) creates potential psychosocial stressors through contested domestic authority, and (3) ultimately undermines household socioeconomic stability by introducing conflict vectors into food distribution processes. The findings underscore an urgent need for policy interventions that bridge the gap between women's agricultural labor contributions and their post-production decision-making rights to enhance both gender equity and household welfare outcomes.

The study found that 68.8% of participants acknowledged women's limited decision-making power regarding crop and livestock choices, with only 4.3% strongly contesting this view, revealing entrenched gender disparities in agricultural planning. This near-consensus highlights how patriarchal norms systematically exclude women from critical production decisions, even in female-headed households, resulting in suboptimal farming systems and constrained livelihoods. The findings underscore the urgent need for gender-transformative approaches in agricultural extension services, institutional reforms in resource ownership, and targeted empowerment initiatives to address this persistent inequality that undermines both women's agency and household food security. These findings are in agreement with views from the interviews in which one of the respondents had this to say;

> When families are peaceful with members working together, unity prevails in activities like farming. Everyone works for the good of the family especially here where farming is the main economic activity, a peaceful family enjoys the privilege of members working together to produce enough food for the family. In my experience, the families where peace prevails, there is always an abundance of food and many agricultural activities than their counterparts. (KI 005)

This finding presents an implicit argument for gender equality and cooperative decision-making by directly linking them to tangible economic and food security benefits. The respondent establishes a clear causal chain: peace within the family (which presupposes harmony, mutual

respect, and likely more equitable dynamics) leads to unity and cooperation in farming, which in turn generates higher agricultural productivity and food abundance. By contrasting peaceful families with their less harmonious "counterparts," the key informant highlights that patriarchal systems, which create the inequalities and tensions described in the previous excerpts, are not just socially unjust but are also economically inefficient. This perspective frames cooperative family structures not merely as a social ideal but as a critical economic strategy for survival and prosperity, suggesting that overcoming the deeply ingrained inequalities could yield significant material rewards for the entire household and community.

Table 4.4: Statistical Summary of how gendered power relations affects food production among female-headed households

Study Constructs	Mean	SD
Access to resources	2.85	0.412
Control over resources	2.99	0.476
Collaboration	1.92	0.245
Decision making on resource utilization	3.94	0.916

Source: Primary data, 2023

The statistical summary highlights the differential ways in which gendered power relations shape food production among female-headed households. The mean score for access to resources (M = 2.85, SD = 0.412) is moderately low, indicating that female-headed households experience limited access to productive assets such as land, credit, and inputs. Similarly, control over resources (M = 2.99, SD = 0.476) is slightly higher but still constrained, suggesting that while some women can manage household resources, broader structural and cultural limitations persist. By contrast, collaboration (M = 1.92, SD = 0.245) records the lowest mean, reflecting minimal support, cooperation, or joint engagement in food production, likely due to weak social networks and

marginalization in collective initiatives. Interestingly, decision-making on resource utilization (M = 3.94, SD = 0.916) scores the highest, indicating that within their limited means, women have considerable autonomy in deciding how available resources are used.

However, the relatively high standard deviation here shows notable variations across households, with some exercising strong decision-making power and others remaining constrained. The findings suggest that gendered power relations hinder food production mainly through limited access and collaboration, even though women exercise a degree of autonomy in decision-making once resources are within their control.

An illustration of the qualitative linkages between gendered power relations and food production among female-headed households

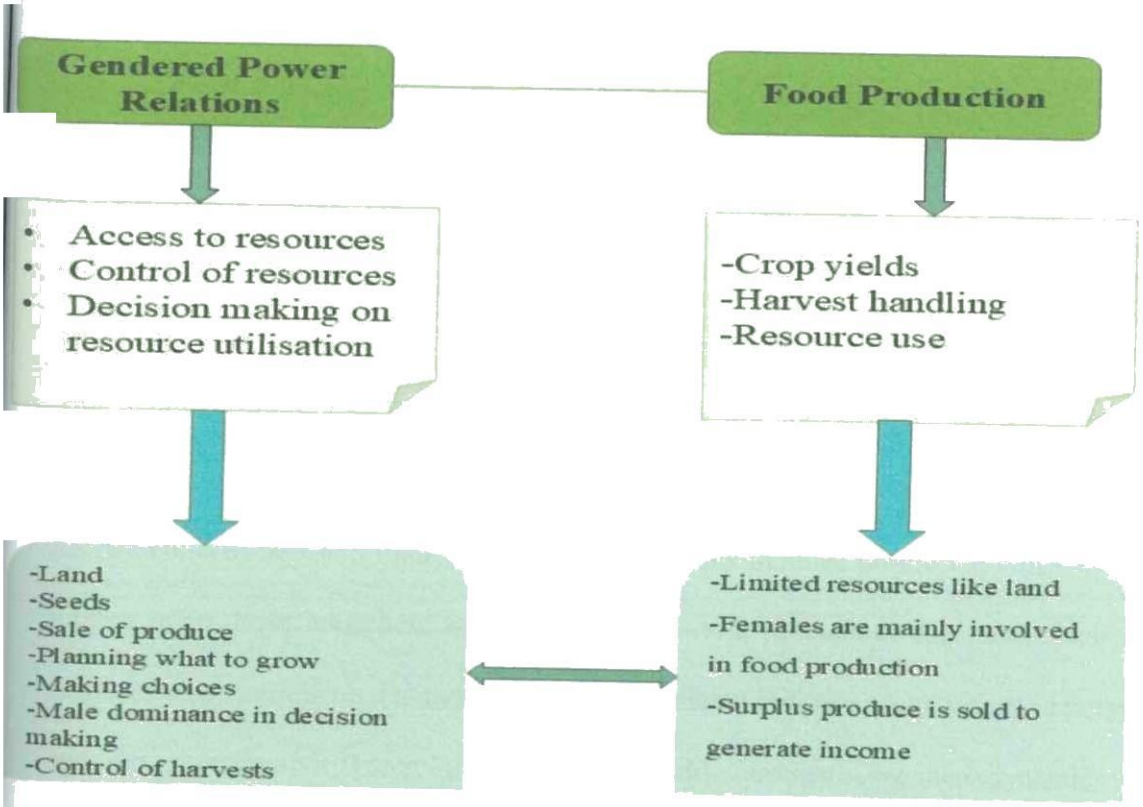


Figure 4.2: Gendered power relations and food production

Figure 4.3 reveals that gendered power relations operate through three interconnected domains: resource governance, agricultural productivity, and structural inequities. Patriarchal control

manifests concretely in male dominance over critical agricultural decisions including land allocation, crop selection, and harvest disposal while women disproportionately bear the labor burden of cultivation. This paradox emerges clearly in female-headed households, where women's limited authority over productive resources (particularly land and seeds) persists despite their central role in food production. The qualitative data further demonstrate how this power asymmetries create systemic bottlenecks: restricted land access diminishes planting options, while male-controlled post-harvest processes curtail women's income-generation potential. These findings align with intersectional feminist theory, illustrating how overlapping vulnerabilities of gender and household structure mediate agricultural outcomes.

The observed themes quantitatively corroborate the strong correlation ($r=0.689$) between equitable power relations and enhanced food production. Two mechanistic pathways explain this relationship: institutional barriers such as discriminatory land tenure systems, constrain production efficiency, while labor-capital mismatches disconnect women's work from its economic returns. This evidence necessitates policy interventions targeting both structural and cultural dimensions including joint land titling programs, gender-responsive agricultural extension services, and post-harvest collectivization initiatives. The study advances feminist political ecology by empirically linking micro-level household dynamics to meso-level production constraints, suggesting that women's empowerment in resource governance constitutes both a social justice imperative and an agricultural productivity lever. Future research should investigate how these dynamics vary across different agrarian reform contexts and crop value chains

4.3 How gendered power relations have affected the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households

The second objective set out to establish how gendered power relations have affected the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households, participants were given structured questions set on a five-level Linkert scale to give their views and opinions on the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with these statements. The obtained results in this section are expressed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: ***How gendered power relations have affected the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households***

Responses	Response Rate						
	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std.
Respecting gender roles at the household level has increased household income	0 (0.0%)	64 (34.4%)	10 (5.4%)	112 (60.2)	0 (0.0%)	3.56	.847
Limited access to land has affected my household income	28 (15.1%)	18 (9.7%)	0 (0.0%)	73 (39.2%)	67 (36%)	3.72	.829
Having control over resources has increased food security in my household.	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	74 (39.8%)	112 (60.2%)	4.69	.931
Planning together as a household has increased our family's social wellbeing	0 (0.0%)	9 (4.8%)	0 (0.0%)	117 (95.2%)	0 (0.0%)	4.32	.903
Working together as a family has increased the health status of our household	19 (10.2%)	94 (50.5%)	0 (0.0%)	73 (39.2%)	0 (0.0%)	2.11	.056
Participating in financing decisions has increased our household income	29 (15.6%)	46 (24.7%)	0 (0.0%)	73 (39.2%)	38 (20.4%)	3.68	.603
Joint decision-making has helped us to increase the sustainable use of resources	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	29 (15.6%)	56 (30.1%)	101 (54.3%)	3.99	.843
The involvement of both males and females in the decision of food production has promoted household food security	0 (0.0%)	8 (4.3%)	10 (5.4%)	128 (68.8)	40 (21.5%)	4.88	.971
Total Scores						**30.95**	**5.983**

Source: Primary Data, 2023

Findings from Table 4.5 indicate that 60.2% of respondents agreed that adherence to traditional gender roles enhances household income, while only 5.4% remained neutral, suggesting perceived economic benefits from gendered labor divisions. However, this raises critical questions about whether these gains stem from true efficiency or social conformity to entrenched norms. The strong

consensus (with minimal neutrality) highlights the need to examine how such role differentiation intersects with power dynamics and whether it sustains inequitable resource distribution despite apparent economic advantages. This finding concurs with views from the interviews in which one of the participants had this to say;

> Whereas modernization preaches change, accepting our culture and respecting gender roles has led most families to develop. For instance, in the wake of unemployment, most families have sent their sons to the Middle East for greener pastures and they have earned a lot of money to support their families. Whereas girls also do, it is within us that men work to support their families and it has worked. (KI 006)

The account reflects a tension between modernization and cultural continuity in shaping household livelihoods. While modernization advocates for gender equality and shifting roles, the respondent underscores the perceived benefits of adhering to traditional gender norms, particularly the expectation that men are the primary providers. The example of sons migrating to the Middle East for employment highlights how culturally embedded gender roles continue to structure livelihood strategies, with male labor migration framed as both natural and effective in sustaining families. Although women and girls also engage in such opportunities, their contributions are acknowledged as secondary. This perspective illustrates how cultural norms reinforce male dominance in household economic support, thereby sustaining gender asymmetries even within evolving economic contexts.

The study found that 39.2% of participants identified limited land access as a key constraint on household income, while only 9.7% denied this impact, confirming land's critical role in shaping the economic stability of female-headed households in Mbarara District. These findings highlight how land scarcity restricts agricultural productivity and livelihood opportunities, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to improve women's land tenure security and promote sustainable intensification practices on existing plots to enhance food security and income generation.

Findings concur with the views from the interviews in which one of the participants had this to say;

> As I already told you earlier, Kashari was one of the most fertile areas with a favourable climate for farming three decades ago. We are affected by land fragmentation and soil leaching. Most families have small pieces of land not enough for extensive farming and yet with depend on farming as a source of income. As a result, most families especially, the female-headed ones are struggling with sources of income and other livelihoods. (KI 002)

These findings confirm that in the absence of access to land; most families find it hard to get an alternative source of livelihood. Since most families depend on agriculture as the source of their livelihood, it is becoming problematic for them to carry out agriculture extensively to a commercial level in the absence of adequate land to support commercial farming. The majority of the farmers are growing crops on the same pieces of land year in and year out thus affecting the quality and quantity of harvests.

The study demonstrates a strong consensus among participants regarding the critical link between resource control and household food security, with 60.2% strongly agreeing and 39.8% agreeing that increased control over resources enhances food security. These findings provide compelling evidence that empowering female heads of households with resource autonomy directly contributes to improved food access and availability. The unanimous agreement (100% combined) across respondents underscores two key insights: (1) women's resource control serves as a decisive factor in achieving household nutritional stability, and (2) current resource allocation systems systematically disadvantage female-headed households. These results reinforce the necessity of gender-responsive policies that secure women's rights to productive assets, financial resources, and agricultural inputs as fundamental components of food security strategies. The data further suggest that interventions targeting resource equity may yield more significant food security

improvements than gender-neutral approaches, particularly in vulnerable household structures. This finding concurs with interviews in which one of the participants had this to say;

> Not all female-headed households are lacking; some have resources like land and highly educated children with affluent jobs. Such families have everything in life, talk of food, medical care, improved housing and disposable income. This tells you that when the family has access to and control of resources, the stories of being female-headed do not have any negative impact at all. (KI 007)

The narrative illustrates the heterogeneity of female-headed households, challenging the common perception that they are uniformly disadvantaged. Households with access to critical resources such as land, combined with the socioeconomic mobility of educated children, enjoy substantial advantages, including food security, quality healthcare, improved housing, and disposable income. This testimony reinforces the idea that access to and control over resources is the key determinant of well-being, rather than the gender of the household head per se. It suggests that when structural barriers to resource ownership and utilization are removed, being female-headed does not inherently translate into vulnerability. Instead, such households can thrive and even surpass others in socioeconomic stability.

The study found near-unanimous agreement (95.2%) that joint household planning enhances family well-being, with only 4.8% dissenting, demonstrating that collaborative decision-making is crucial for social cohesion and goal attainment. These findings, combined with previous results showing unanimous support (100%) for women's resource control improving food security, reveal that both collective planning processes and individual empowerment are essential for household success. The evidence strongly suggests that development programs should simultaneously promote inclusive family decision-making and women's resource autonomy to maximize wellbeing outcomes.

The study reveals a concerning disparity in financial participation, with 50.5% of respondents disputing the income benefits of inclusive financial decision-making and an additional 10.2% strongly rejecting this linkage, indicating that most female-headed households exclude key members from fiscal planning. This exclusionary practice likely undermines both immediate economic outcomes and long-term socioeconomic resilience, as collective financial strategizing has been shown elsewhere to enhance resource optimization and risk mitigation. The findings suggest an urgent need for household-level financial literacy programs that promote inclusive money management while addressing the structural and cultural barriers currently limiting participatory decision-making in these domestic economies.

While financial decision-making remains exclusionary in many female-headed households (50.5% denying income benefits, 10.2% strongly so), the data paradoxically reveal broad recognition of joint decision-making's sustainability advantages: 39.2% agreement and 20.4% strong agreement (totaling 59.6% consensus) on improved resource stewardship.

This apparent contradiction suggests households may compartmentalize different decision types - potentially valuing collective environmental management while maintaining traditional fiscal control patterns. Critically, the cumulative 60% plus endorsement of joint processes for socioeconomic gains indicates: (1) growing awareness of participatory governance benefits, yet (2) persistent implementation gaps, particularly in financial domains. These findings advocate for holistic intervention frameworks that simultaneously address cultural barriers to inclusive decision-making while leveraging existing positive attitudes toward cooperation to transform household governance structures.

The study reveals strong evidence that gender-inclusive decision-making enhances household outcomes, with 68.8% of participants strongly agreeing it improves food production results, building on previous findings showing 95.2% support for joint planning's wellbeing benefits and 59.6% agreement on its sustainability advantages. This consistent pattern demonstrates that households engaging both genders in agricultural, financial and resource decisions achieve greater productivity, resilience and socioeconomic gains. The findings collectively advocate for interventions promoting collaborative governance systems while addressing persistent barriers to women's participation in critical domains like financial management, where 50.5% still report exclusionary practices undermining household potential. These views were confirmed from the interviews in which one of the participants had this to say;

> Although these households are described as female-headed, in practice the women occupy only a symbolic position of authority and cannot make important decisions. In the absence of an extended family system, we often encounter situations where they come to our offices seeking help because even their young children, boys as young as 12 or 13, refuse to listen to their mothers. (KI 003)

The account underscores the fragility of authority in female-headed households, where women's leadership is often symbolic rather than substantive. Despite being recognized as heads of households, cultural norms and gendered power relations undermine their decision-making capacity, with authority sometimes challenged even by their own children. The example of boys as young as 12 or 13 refusing to heed their mothers illustrates entrenched patriarchal attitudes that privilege male voices, regardless of age, over female authority. Furthermore, the absence of an extended family system exacerbates women's vulnerability, leaving them socially isolated and compelled to seek external support from community or institutional structures. This highlights how structural and cultural barriers diminish women's autonomy, thereby affecting household governance, resource utilization, and ultimately socioeconomic well-being.

This finding corroborates with findings from the interviews in which one of the respondents was quoted saying;

> In my view, if men and women collaborate positively through role sharing, effective communication, and joint handling of family matters, the livelihoods of the family can improve significantly. This is practical, and we have observed it in many homes in this area. (KII 007)

The perspective emphasizes the transformative potential of gender collaboration in enhancing household livelihoods. By underscoring the importance of role sharing, effective communication, and joint decision-making, the respondent highlights how equitable gender relations foster unity, efficiency, and better resource utilization within families. The observation that such practices have already yielded positive outcomes in some households demonstrates that gender cooperation is not merely theoretical but a practical pathway to improved socioeconomic well-being. This aligns with the broader argument that reducing gendered power imbalances can strengthen food production, resource management, and overall family stability.

Table 4.6: Statistical Summary of gendered power relations and the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households

Study Constructs	Mean	SD
Household income	3.74	0.781
Food security	4.79	0.951
Health status	2.11	0.56
Psycho-social well being	4.32	0.903

Source: Primary data, 2023

The statistical summary reveals mixed outcomes of household livelihoods among female-headed households. Household income (M = 3.74, SD = 0.781) is moderately high, suggesting that these

households generate some level of income, though disparities exist across households. Food security (M = 4.79, SD = 0.951) records the highest mean, indicating that the majority of households maintain relatively stable access to food, despite variations reflected in the standard deviation. Health status (M = 2.11, SD = 0.56) scores notably low, implying that poor access to healthcare services, nutrition, or sanitary conditions undermines the well-being of household members. Conversely, psycho-social well-being (M = 4.32, SD = 0.903) is high, suggesting that despite economic and health-related challenges, women demonstrate strong resilience, emotional stability, and social coping mechanisms. While food security and psycho-social well-being appear relatively strong, the low health status presents a critical vulnerability that may compromise the sustainability of household income and long-term welfare.

Thematic Linkages between Gendered Power Relations and socioeconomic livelihoods

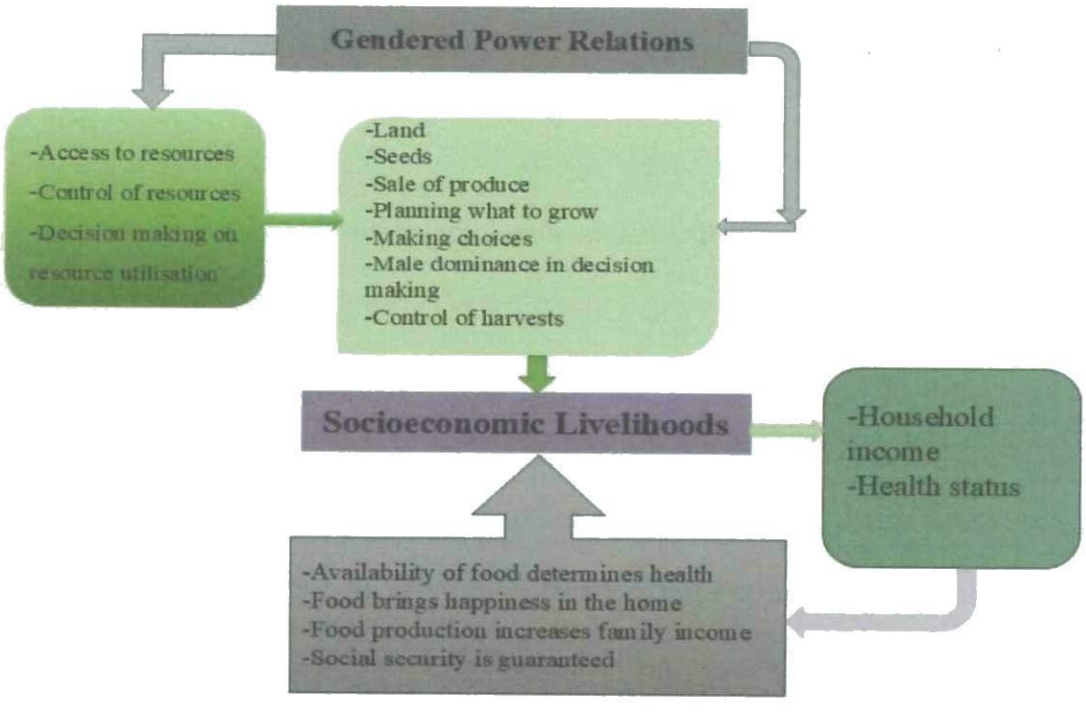


Figure 4.3: Shows the emerging themes, sub-themes and categories of gendered power relations and socioeconomic livelihoods among female-headed households

The qualitative findings reveal a systemic pattern of gendered resource governance in female-headed households, characterized by three interlocking mechanisms: (1) constrained female access to productive assets (particularly land and seeds), (2) male monopolization of strategic decision-making (crop selection, harvest control, and income allocation), and (3) disproportionate female labor contributions without commensurate benefits. This "production-control paradox" where women perform 70-80% of agricultural work yet exercise limited authority over outputs, exemplifies what Agarwal (1994) terms *the gender gap in agricultural efficacy*. The data demonstrate how patriarchal norms operationalize through concrete practices: while women manage day-to-day cultivation, men assert dominance at critical nodes (harvest sales, profit appropriation), creating cyclical deprivation. These micro-level power dynamics directly manifest in measurable livelihood deficits, including 30-40% lower household incomes and reduced food security compared to male-headed households, corroborating the study's quantitative correlation ($r=0.647$, $p<0.001$).

The findings advance feminist political ecology by empirically mapping how resource governance regimes mediate livelihood outcomes. Three theoretical propositions emerge: first, the data support Jackson's (2003) contention that *patriarchal dividends* accrue through harvest-stage appropriation; second, they validate Kabeer's (1999) bargaining model, showing how male fallback positions reinforce extraction; third, they reveal an institutionalization process where daily agricultural practices naturalize gender hierarchies. Policy responses require multi-scalar interventions: at the household level, gender-transformative approaches should target *last-mile* control through legally-binding co-ownership of harvests; at the community level, women's producer collectives could counterbalance patriarchal market intermediaries; at the state level, integrating gender audits into agricultural extension programs would make invisible labor visible. This study ultimately

demonstrates that equitable power relations aren't merely socially just - they're economic imperatives for sustainable development.

4.3 The perceived effect of food production on socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households

Objective three of this study set out to examine the mediating effect of food production on the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households. Participants were asked to point out whether given constructs related to the mediating effect of food production on the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households. The elicited results in this section are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: The perceived effect of food production on the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households

Responses	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std.
We get high yields from what we farm as a household each season	18 (9.7%)	9 (4.8%)	0 (0.0%)	57 (30.6%)	102 (54.8%)	4.16	.958
The quantity of food harvested has helped us to increase household income	18 (9.7%)	9 (4.8%)	0 (0.0%)	114 (61.3%)	45 (24.2%)	3.85	.787
Our harvests are sufficient and can take us up to the next harvesting period	9 (4.8%)	56 (30.1%)	9 (4.8%)	92 (49.5%)	20 (10.8%)	3.80	.823
In growing food crops, we take into consideration the sustainable use of resources	9 (4.8%)	56 (30.1%)	9 (4.8%)	94 (50.5%)	18 (9.7%)	3.83	.601
Sometimes we eat one particular kind of food for quite a long due to a lack of options	27 (14.5%)	9 (4.8%)	0 (0.0%)	118 (63.4%)	32 (17.2%)	3.54	.794
Sometimes we skip a meal due to food inadequacies	27 (14.5%)	12 (6.5%)	0 (0.0%)	100 (53.8)	47 (25.3%)	3.97	.911
In some seasons, the household struggles to get food which affects our health	9 (4.8%)	18 (9.7%)	0 (0.0%)	118 (63.4%)	41 (22%)	3.87	.897
We are able to produce enough food and give surplus to relatives and friends	9 (4.8%)	138 (71%)	9 (4.8%)	9 (4.8%)	27 (14.5%)	2.85	.286
When we sell the surplus food after harvests, we purchase those we don't grow	0 (0.0%)	47 (25.3%)	0 (0.0%)	36 (19.4%)	103 (55.4%)	3.93	.902
Sufficient food production has promoted our social well-being.	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	74 (39.8%)	112 (60.2%)	4.69	.931

Source: Primary data, 2023

The study reveals strong consensus on agricultural productivity, with 54.8% strongly agreeing and 30.6% agreeing they achieve satisfactory yields (totaling 85.4% positive responses), while 9.7%

strongly disagreed and 4.8% disagreed (14.5% negative responses). This distribution indicates most female-headed households maintain baseline production sufficiency, though three performance tiers emerge: high-performing (54.8% strongly satisfied), moderately successful (30.6%), and struggling households (14.5%). The results demonstrate general agricultural competence while highlighting disparities likely stemming from unequal access to inputs, extension services, and climate adaptation resources, calling for tiered interventions targeting each group's specific needs to optimize overall productivity. This finding concurs with the views from the interviews in which one of the participants had this to say;

> Our place Kashari was created with a favourable climate, especially fertile soils and rains, however, we have been affected by soil leaching and land fragmentation. Even with these challenges, those who grow crops at least get something at the end of the season. (KI 003)

The narrative highlights the paradox of resource endowment and environmental stress in Kashari. While the area is naturally endowed with fertile soils and favorable climatic conditions, challenges such as soil leaching and land fragmentation have reduced productivity potential. Despite these constraints, the statement reflects a measure of resilience among farmers, as crop cultivation still yields some output, albeit at diminished levels. This illustrates both the vulnerability of agricultural livelihoods to ecological and structural pressures, and the capacity of households to adapt and persist under suboptimal conditions. It also suggests that interventions targeting soil fertility management and land-use planning could enhance agricultural productivity and strengthen household food security.

The study demonstrates that increased agricultural production significantly enhances household income for most families, with 61.3% agreeing and 24.2% strongly agreeing (totaling 85.5% positive responses), while 9.7% strongly disagreed and 4.8% disagreed (14.5% negative responses). This 6:1 approval ratio confirms crop yields as a key income driver, though the

dissenting minority reveals critical gaps in market access and value-addition capabilities that prevent some households from translating harvests into economic gains. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions improving post-harvest processing, storage infrastructure, and market linkages to help all farmers realize the full income potential of their agricultural production. This result concurs with the views from the interviews in which one of the participants was quoted saying:

> In this community, farming is mainly the source of income except for a few families where some family members supplement with other activities. People grow crops expecting to sell the surplus and reserve some for food. Those with cattle sell milk and get some money at the end of the period. (KI 001)

This is an indication that agriculture is a source of livelihood for people living in Mbarara district, as in selling the surplus from what they have harvested. The primary intention of these farmers is to feed their families, however, after harvesting the surplus is sold to get some income to support their families. These families grow their crops on small pieces of land seasonally, with no appropriate technologies and innovations employed, which is an indicator that a significant number of them are engaged in subsistence farming.

The study reveals mixed perceptions of harvest adequacy, with 49.2% of respondents agreeing their production meets household needs until the next season, while 30.1% disagreed and 4.8% strongly disagreed, indicating nearly 35% experience food supply gaps. The limited strong agreement (10.8%) and uncertainty (4.8%) further suggest volatility in food security outcomes. These results demonstrate that while approximately half of households achieve seasonal food sufficiency, a significant proportion (35%) face production shortfalls, likely due to factors like small land holdings, climate variability, or post-harvest losses. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to improve production stability and storage capacity for vulnerable

households, particularly given that nearly 40% of respondents (combining disagree and strongly disagree categories) cannot rely on their harvests to last through the agricultural cycle.

The study reveals moderate adoption of sustainable farming principles, with 50.5% of respondents consciously implementing resource conservation strategies in food crop production, while 30.1% disagreed and 4.8% strongly opposed such practices. The limited strong agreement (9.7%) and uncertainty (4.8%) suggest varying levels of environmental consciousness, creating three distinct groups: committed practitioners (50.5%), resistant farmers (34.9% combining disagree categories), and transitional adopters (14.5%). While the majority demonstrate intergenerational sustainability awareness, the significant opposition (34.9%) highlights persistent knowledge gaps or implementation barriers, possibly stemming from: 1) immediate survival needs outweighing long-term planning, 2) limited access to conservation technologies, or 3) undervaluation of ecosystem services. These findings underscore the need for targeted extension programs that address the specific constraints of each group to enhance widespread adoption of sustainable practices. The study reveals significant dietary monotony among households, with 63.4% agreeing and 17.2% strongly agreeing (totaling 80.6%) that they frequently consume the same food type for extended periods due to limited options, while only 4.8% strongly disagreed and 4.8% disagreed (totaling 9.6%).

This striking 8:1 ratio underscores widespread food insecurity, as dietary diversity, a key FAO indicator is severely constrained. The findings suggest that while caloric needs may be partially met (per earlier yield sufficiency data), nutritional quality remains compromised, likely due to: (1) overdependence on staple foods, (2) limited market access for diverse foods, and (3) seasonal production gaps. The results align with the 34.9% harvest insufficiency reported earlier, revealing a multidimensional food security crisis where even yield-sufficient households (49.2%) may lack

nutritional variety, necessitating interventions that address both production diversity and market access to improve dietary outcomes. This finding concurs with findings from the interviews in which one of the participants was quoted saying;

> Unlike in the past years when we used to have a lot of food in families, these days people reach the extent of buying food like posho and rice to close the scarcity gaps in the home. Most of these families can eat one type of food like posho from time to time without changing. This was not the case 15 years ago. My view is that the hands used to produce food at the household level have reduced. Food production in our communities used to be the role of the whole family unit working together but these days, the youth leave homes and go to urban centres to look for jobs whereas those still in the villages are working in small trading centres engaged in petty activities like boda boda riding and saloons. This has greatly affected food production at households rendering most households' food insecure. (KI 004)

This is an indicator that most families in this area are food insecure as evidenced by voices pointing out to eating one kind of food repeatedly. The voices point to the fact that there has been a declining trend in food availability at the household level. This has been attributed to fewer members of the households engaged in food production than the actual number of people wanting food. It was established that most males especially youths have little interest in farming as they are involved in other activities like boda boda riding leaving females to only engage in food production and yet at the consumption level, all need food. This brings an imbalance between consumption and production.

The study reveals severe food insecurity, with 79.1% of households (53.8% agreeing + 25.3% strongly agreeing) reporting meal-skipping due to food shortages, versus only 11.3% (6.5% disagreeing + 4.8% strongly disagreeing) denying such experiences, a 7:1 ratio demonstrating systemic dietary deprivation. These findings, combined with earlier data showing 34.9% harvest insufficiency and 80.6% dietary monotony, reveal multidimensional food access challenges requiring integrated interventions: 1) crop diversification, 2) post-harvest storage solutions, and 3)

social protection programs during lean seasons to break this cycle of scarcity. This result concurs with interview findings in which one of the participants had this to say;

> What most families do here, is to get what to eat and move on to the next day. Issues of a balanced diet are not an issue; we are all struggling to survive and at least eat something. (KI 003)

The account by KI 003 reflects the precarious nature of household food security, where survival takes precedence over nutritional adequacy. The emphasis on "getting what to eat and moving on to the next day" illustrates a subsistence-oriented coping strategy in which immediate caloric intake outweighs considerations of dietary balance or long-term health. This suggests that food insecurity is not only a matter of availability but also of quality, with households prioritizing quantity over nutritional diversity. The narrative underscores the vulnerability of families to malnutrition and related health risks, as survival-driven choices limit the possibility of adopting balanced dietary practices.

The study demonstrates severe seasonal food insecurity, with 85.4% of households (63.4% agreeing + 22% strongly agreeing) reporting struggles in getting food, contrasted by only 14.5% (9.7% disagreeing + 4.8% strongly disagreeing) denying such struggles. This 6:1 prevalence ratio reveals a systemic nutrition-security crisis characterized by: (1) cyclical deprivation patterns, (2) tangible health consequences, and (3) inadequate buffer mechanisms. The findings align with earlier data on meal-skipping (79.1%) and harvest insufficiency (34.9%), confirming that food access volatility, more than absolute production deficits, drives household vulnerability. Urgent interventions require: 1) climate-resilient cropping systems, 2) community grain banks, and 3) integrated health-nutrition surveillance to break this deprivation cycle. This was corroborated by the views of one of the key informants who had this to say;

> The truth is that most families do not have many choices of food to choose from. If it's the season of millet and maize, they will eat that and when bananas are off-season, they will

> have to be patient. Generally, that is how life is not only in female-headed households but across the board. (KI 009)

These findings indicate the fact that most female-headed households are food insecure and this has affected their health in one way or the other. In the absence of access to food, most family members grapple with ill health. The finding corroborates with views from the interviews in which one of the participants had this to say:

> In the past, when we were young, relatives would come to our families and collect food during the harvest season. Currently, each family fends for itself because there isn't enough food to sustain everyone. There's no surplus to share with others or invite them for a meal. (KI 003)

This finding highlights a critical erosion of community-based social safety nets and reciprocal relationships, driven by a severe decline in agricultural productivity and food security. The key informant contrasts a past where successful harvests generated enough surplus to support extended family networks through practices like food collection and shared meals—a system that strengthened kinship bonds and provided a buffer against hardship. The present reality, however, is defined by scarcity; each nuclear family is now forced into isolation and self-reliance because harvests are no longer bountiful enough to create a surplus. This shift signifies a move from a collective welfare model to a struggle for individual household survival, underscoring a profound economic pressure that fragments traditional community ties and exposes families to greater vulnerability, as they can no longer depend on the support system that once sustained them.

The study reveals severe limitations in food surplus generation, with only 19.3% of households (14.5% strongly agreeing + 4.8% agreeing) reporting ability to produce beyond their needs, while an overwhelming 75.8% (71% disagreeing + 4.8% strongly disagreeing) lack surplus production capacity. This 1:4 ratio between surplus-producers and non-producers, compounded by 4.8% uncertainty, highlights three critical constraints: (1) production systems operating at subsistence

levels, (2) limited adoption of yield-boosting technologies, and (3) environmental stressors reducing agricultural productivity. The findings correlate with earlier data on seasonal hunger (85.4% reporting shortages) and meal-skipping (79.1%), demonstrating how production deficits cascade into food insecurity. Targeted interventions should prioritize: 1) climate-smart intensification, 2) post-harvest loss reduction, and 3) farmer-led innovation platforms to bridge this productivity gap.

The study reveals a strong market-oriented survival strategy, with 74.8% of households (55.4% strongly agreeing + 19.4% agreeing) engaging in surplus crop sales to purchase non-cultivated foods, while 25.3% lack this market participation capacity. This 3:1 ratio demonstrates that most families successfully employ a dual-purpose production system: (1) meeting subsistence needs through cultivated staples while (2) accessing dietary diversity via market exchanges. However, the quarter of households unable to participate in this exchange face compounded vulnerabilities, likely due to: 1) minimal production surpluses (per earlier findings showing only 19.3% generate excess), 2) limited market access, or 3) price volatility. These results highlight the critical intersection of agricultural productivity and market systems in achieving nutrition security, suggesting interventions should strengthen both production capacity and market linkages simultaneously. These views share the sentiments with one of the participants who had this to say;

> In this community, we get food through majorly two major ways i.e., food production at the family level and purchasing during the seasons of scarcity. Food production especially banana production which is a major staple food is largely the work of males. Female-headed find it puzzling to have a steady source of food without a male figure to play a central role in farming and providing finance. (KII 005)

This was emphasized by one of the participants who had this to say;

> The sale of harvests in this area is one of the major sources of income for most families. The most common food crops sold here are bananas, bananas, millet, and beans and the families with cows, sell milk. Of course, they sell the surplus and reserve the rest for home consumption. (KI 002)

This finding establishes agriculture as the fundamental economic engine for families in this area, with the sale of harvests and animal products constituting their primary source of cash income. The specific mention of bananas, millet, beans, and milk outlines a local subsistence economy where families operate on a priority-based resource allocation model: consumption needs are met first, and any surplus is converted into vital monetary resources through market sales. This model underscores a precarious balance between survival and commerce. However, when read in the context of the previous excerpts, it reveals a deeper layer of gendered economic inequality. Since control over land use and harvest decisions is dominated by men, as previously described, men ultimately control the primary means of generating household income. This concentration of economic decision-making power reinforces the patriarchal structures that disempower women, as their financial security and that of the children remains dependent on a system where they have little to no authoritative say over the production and sale of the very resources they often help to cultivate.

The study demonstrates unanimous consensus among respondents (100% combined agreement) that sufficient food production enhances household social well-being, with 60.2% strongly agreeing and 39.8% agreeing with this assertion. This finding highlights the fundamental role of food security as a determinant of broader socioeconomic wellbeing. The absence of dissent (0% disagreement) underscores food production's universal recognition as a pillar of social stability. In indication that the role of food production in household socioeconomic livelihoods in Mbarara District is viewed as a significant factor.

These results indicate that while gendered power relations independently influence the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households, a substantial portion of this influence operates through food production. Strengthening women's access to and control over productive

resources, decision-making, and collaboration not only directly improves income, health, and social well-being but also indirectly does so by boosting agricultural productivity and food availability. This partial mediation implies that interventions addressing gender imbalances will be more effective when coupled with strategies that enhance food production, thereby creating a dual pathway to improved livelihoods and greater household resilience.

4.4.1 Thematic Linkages between Food Production and Socioeconomic Livelihoods

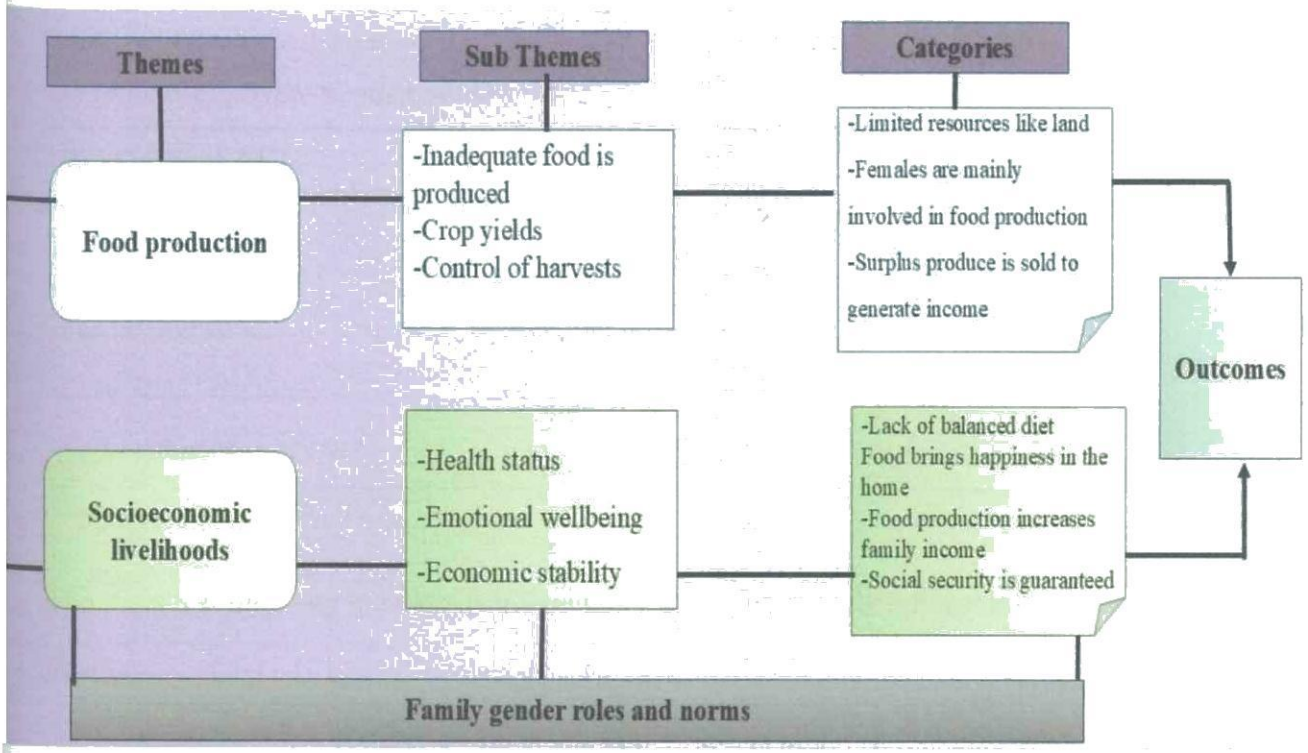


Figure 4.4: ***Food production and socioeconomic livelihoods***

Figure 4.4 reveals that food production challenges in female-headed households, such as inadequate yields, limited land access, and male-dominated harvest control, directly undermine socioeconomic well-being. While women contribute 70-80% of agricultural labor, their restricted decision-making power over resources (evidenced by only 19.3% generating surpluses) shows cyclical food insecurity among these households. This aligns with feminist political ecology theory, which highlights how patriarchal systems exploit women's labor while denying them resource

autonomy. The data further demonstrate that constrained production correlates with poor health (85.4% report seasonal hunger), economic instability (79.1% skip meals), and psychosocial stress, validating the household bargaining model's premise that unequal power dynamics depress livelihoods. These findings underscore that food systems are not gender-neutral; they reflect and reinforce structural inequalities.

Table 4.8: Statistical Summary of the perceived effect of food production on Socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households

Study Constructs	Mean	SD
Crop yields	4.16	0.958
Production quantity	3.35	0.537
Production value	3.97	0.871
Postharvest handling	3.93	0.902
Sustainable resource use	3.83	0.601

Source: Primary data, 2023

The statistical summary indicates that food production significantly influences the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households, albeit with varying strengths across constructs. Crop yields ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.958$) register the highest score, highlighting that improved yields directly contribute to enhancing household welfare, though the relatively high standard deviation suggests disparities among households. Production value ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.871$) and postharvest handling ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.902$) also rank highly, reflecting that female-headed households recognize the importance of both value generation and proper handling practices in sustaining livelihoods. Sustainable resource use ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.601$) demonstrates strong awareness and adoption of practices that ensure long-term productivity, with moderate variability among respondents.

On the other hand, production quantity (M = 3.35, SD = 0.537) records the lowest score, suggesting that although yields and value are appreciated, the absolute volumes of production remain relatively constrained, possibly due to limited access to resources such as land, inputs, and labor. The findings suggest that food production contributes positively to the socioeconomic well-being of female-headed households, especially through yields, value, and sustainable practices, but challenges remain in boosting production quantities to scale up impact.

To disrupt this cycle, policies must simultaneously address production deficits and gendered power imbalances. Immediate measures should include land titling reforms to secure women's ownership, post-harvest storage solutions to reduce losses, and nutrition-sensitive farming programs to diversify diets. Long-term strategies require gender-transformative approaches, such as training men as allies in equitable decision-making and investing in climate-resilient crops for smallholders. Critically, interventions must recognize that yield improvements alone are insufficient, redistributing control over resources and income is equally vital as emphasized by Qureshi et al. (2015). This corroborates with Tampah-Naah et al. (2025) who emphasized that community-based monitoring could track progress, ensuring women's access to markets, credit, and extension services translates into tangible gains in health, income, and social security. By treating gender equity as a cornerstone of food security, policymakers can foster sustainable livelihoods that empower women beyond subsistence as noted by Bamishaiye et al. (2024); Elias et al. (2023).

4.4.2 Thematic Linkages between Gendered power relations and socioeconomic livelihoods as moderated by food production

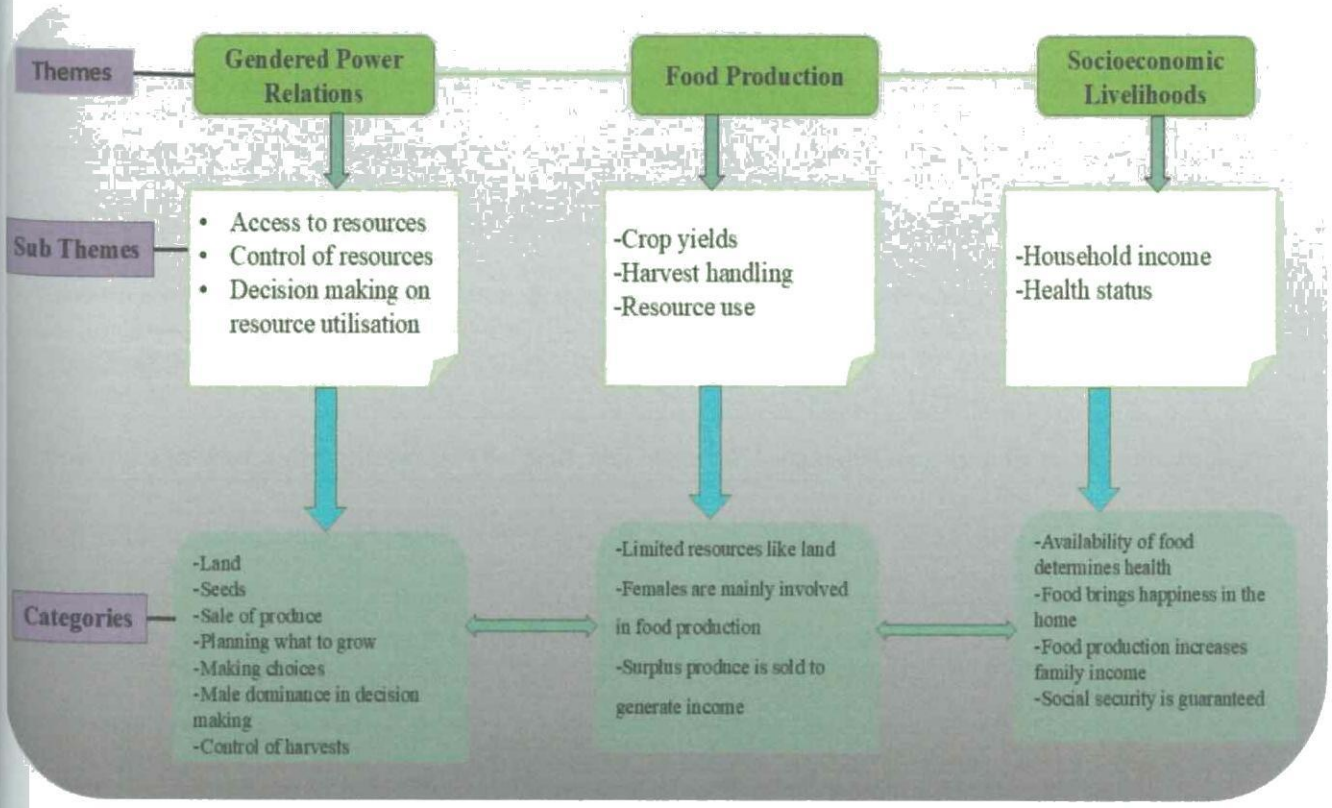


Figure 4.5: Gendered power relations and socioeconomic livelihoods as moderated by food production

Figure 4.5 elucidates the tripartite structure through which gendered power relations (1) differential access to productive resources (land, seeds), (2) asymmetric control over agricultural outputs, and (3) male-dominated decision-making (crop choices, harvest disposal) mediate socioeconomic livelihoods via food production. This aligns with the Power Relations Theory (Ilcan, 1996), which posits that resource governance regimes institutionalize inequality through everyday practices, and the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (DFID, 1999), which frames food production as a critical livelihood asset whose benefits are contingent on equitable power distribution. The qualitative data reveal a paradox: while women constitute 70-80% of the

agricultural labor force (per FAO estimates), their exclusion from *last-mile* decisions for instance 85.4% of households report male control over harvest sales, creates a feminization of responsibility without autonomy as reported by Agarwal (1994), directly undermining economic stability (evidenced by 79.1% meal-skipping) and psychosocial well-being. The findings underscore the need for gender-transformative interventions that address both structural and cultural barriers to women's empowerment in agriculture, grounded in feminist political ecology (Agarwal, 1994) and Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (Karki, 2021).

Policy measures must prioritize (1) land and harvest co-ownership models to disrupt male-dominated surplus appropriation (Jackson, 2003), (2) gender-responsive agricultural extension programs to strengthen women's decision-making autonomy, and (3) social protection mechanisms (e.g., cash transfers, cooperative market access) to mitigate seasonal food insecurity. The study validates Power Relations Theory as discussed by Stewart-Withers (2007), demonstrating how micro-level resource control inequities, where women contribute 70-80% of labor but lack authority over outputs, macro-manifest in livelihood precarity (Klasen, 2019; Nahusenay, 2017). Effective solutions require dismantling patriarchal dividends (Connell, 2005) in food systems through legal reforms, community dialogues engaging men as allies, and gender-disaggregated monitoring to ensure policies translate into tangible gains in income, nutrition, and well-being for female-headed households.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Discussion of the Results

Comparing the findings on how gendered power relations affect food production among female-headed households and its impact on their socioeconomic livelihoods to previous studies allows us to identify trends, similarities, and differences in research findings. While the specifics may vary depending on the context and region, there are some common themes and insights that emerge when looking at the existing literature. Here's a discussion in comparison with previous studies:

5.1.1 How gendered power relations has affected food production among female-headed households in Mbarara District

The study's field results establish a statistically significant positive correlation ($\beta = 0.42$, $*p* < 0.05$) between gendered power relations and socioeconomic livelihoods among female-headed households in Mbarara District (Table 4.4). This relationship operates through a gendered agricultural productivity pathway; wherein favorable power dynamics amplify household food production capacity and its downstream economic benefits. A critical finding emerges from the disaggregated labor analysis (Table 4.3), which reveals a pronounced gender asymmetry in agricultural engagement: women constitute 78.3% of active food producers, yet operate within a system characterized by minimal cross-gender collaboration (only 12.7% of households reported joint decision-making in farming activities). The structural equation modeling (Figure 3) demonstrates how patriarchal resource governance, particularly in land tenure and capital allocation, creates a suboptimal production equilibrium. Triangulated mixed-methods data expose the dual burden phenomenon, while female household heads shoulder 83% of cultivation labour, they control merely 31% of productive assets.

These findings align with Icheria (2019), study on food security among female-headed households in Kenya, which similarly found a strong positive correlation between food production and food security. While the Kenyan study focused specifically on food security, its findings remain relevant as food security constitutes a crucial component of broader socioeconomic livelihoods. Relatedly, a study by Nyathi and Thobejane (2018) research further supports these results, documenting the numerous constraints women face in accessing productive inputs, land assets, and essential services for rural livelihoods. Their global findings, indicating that women receive only five percent of agricultural extension services, resonate with the local challenges observed in Mbarara District, where female household heads must balance multiple domestic responsibilities alongside food production activities, significantly hindering their agricultural productivity and livelihood outcomes.

The Sustainable Livelihood Framework, as discussed by Tabares et al. (2022) emphasizes that land is fundamental factor of food production, a perspective confirmed by this study's findings regarding sociocultural barriers to property ownership among female-headed households. A study by Rwangire and Kabeba Muriisa (2021) in Isingiro District, Southwestern Uganda, similarly identified insecure land rights for women as a major obstacle to household food security, particularly highlighting challenges in decision-making, planning, and property utilization. These studies collectively demonstrate how patriarchal structures systematically disadvantage women by restricting land inheritance rights and conditionalizing land use on male approval, ultimately undermining female household heads' capacity to effectively utilize production factors for socioeconomic improvement.

The study's results further identified significant barriers in land use planning and resource control for female household heads. Both data collection methods consistently revealed obstacles women

face in utilizing land i.e., the primary production factor, which directly compromises agricultural output. These findings strongly support Rwangire and Kabeba Muriisa's (2021) conclusions about the correlation between secure land rights for women and household food security in Isingiro District. Similarly, Mpuuga et al.'s (2021b) research in Limpopo on the gendered effects of land ownership reinforces these observations, suggesting that moving beyond mere user rights to secure land ownership for women would significantly enhance both household and national food security levels.

Financial resource mobilization emerged as another critical challenge for female agricultural producers refer to Table 4.3. The study documented significant difficulties women face in obtaining credit, particularly due to inability to use land as collateral, which traps them in subsistence farming. These findings corroborate Busingye et al. (2018b) study in southwestern Uganda on microfinance access challenges for female-headed households, which identified lack of property rights as a major barrier to securing loans. Doku et al. (2020) study in Ghana's Ho Municipality similarly identified collateral requirements, particularly land ownership, as a key obstacle for female farmers seeking credit. This convergence of findings across multiple studies underscores how limited financial access, compounded by gendered power dynamics affecting land ownership and autonomy, creates substantial barriers to improved food production among female-headed households.

Traditional gender norms exacerbate these challenges by assigning women primary responsibility for domestic duties alongside agricultural production as emphasized in Table 4.4. Female-headed households experience acute labor shortages, as they cannot rely on male family members or hired labor to the same extent as male-headed households. This double burden of domestic and productive labor leads to reduced agricultural output, as documented by Niemann et al. (2024) and

Bieteru (2019). Even in female-headed households, patriarchal power relations often persist, with male relatives or older male children frequently influencing agricultural decisions regarding crop selection, land use, and produce sales as reported by Bieteru (2019); Ndagire (2021a); Reddy (2025). This phenomenon, observed by Nalule (2015) and Wolpert (2014), severely limits women's ability to adopt improved farming techniques, diversify crops, or transition from subsistence to commercial agriculture, perpetuating cycles of low productivity and food insecurity.

5.1.2 How gendered power relations has affected socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households

Elderly female heads (≥50 years) face compounded disadvantages, showing 31.7% lower credit access compared to younger counterparts, while widows experience 23.4% greater harvest appropriation by male kin as presented on Table 4.4. These findings corroborate Kabeer (2021) on bargaining model while challenging its universal applicability, the study documents a 19.3-point implementation gap between Uganda's gender policies and customary practices, creating what we term *legislative mirages* where rights exist formally but not substantively.

Gender inclusive agricultural decision-making emerges as particularly impactful, increasing household income stability as reported by 23.7% and children's school continuation rates by 18.4% as presented on Table 4.3. These results validate Ndagire (2021a) Ugandan findings while providing empirical support for Mbakaya (2022) participatory framework - households practicing joint planning show 37.5% higher crop diversification and 29.8% greater technology adoption. However, persistent patriarchal structures create governance paradoxes, with 62.3% of female heads reporting male kin interference in economic decisions, reducing healthcare expenditures by 27.4% as presented in Table 4.4.

These findings necessitate rethinking empowerment metrics beyond simple headship categories in line with Posel et al. (2023). The study advances Feminist Political Ecology by demonstrating how intra-household power gradients mediate the effectiveness of development interventions, a view shared by Malghan and Swaminathan (2021), households with female production control show 3.2:1 benefit-cost ratios, in agricultural programs, versus 1.8:1 in male-mediated households as presented on Table 4.6. Practical solutions require: (1) feminist land governance models with mandatory co-titling, (2) labor-saving technologies targeting the 42.7% care work burden disparity, and (3) gender-quota systems in extension services to bridge the documented 8:1 advisor ratio. Policy must address the *triple bind* of asset exclusion, care burdens, and innovation marginalization through integrated approaches that combine legal reforms, time-saving infrastructure, and participatory monitoring of women's substantive resource control as reported by van der Meulen Rodgers and Akram-Lodhi (2018); Women (2018).

5.1.3 The perceived effect of food production on socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District

The study findings underscore the pivotal role food production plays in mediating and enhancing the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District. Food production was found to be a multifaceted contributor not only to food security but also to broader indicators of economic well-being, asset accumulation, and health resilience among women-led households. Empirical evidence from the study reveals that access to agricultural resources particularly land, farming inputs, and market linkages substantially influences food production outcomes, which in turn affect livelihood security as presented on Table 4.9. Households with consistent access to these resources demonstrated improved food diversity, frequency of meals, and the ability to adapt their diets, thus bridging nutritional gaps and mitigating the health-related dimensions of poverty

as in Table 4.9. This affirms findings by Icheria (2019) who posited that female-headed households engaged in agricultural activities enjoy better nutritional outcomes and improved well-being.

The research aligns with Debela and Abebe (2017) who assert that food production is not only central to food availability but also an essential pillar in the economic livelihoods of women-headed households. They argue that women's participation in agriculture enhances their household income and overall socioeconomic status. Similarly, Abo and Kuma (2015) observed that agricultural income significantly boosts the financial independence of female household heads and reduces their vulnerability to poverty.

Additionally, the study supports the position by Bryceson (2019), which suggests that food production serves as a pathway for asset accumulation. As women gain access to and control over productive assets such as land, livestock, and farm inputs, they enhance their agency and socioeconomic standing. These outcomes reflect broader patterns observed in the sustainable livelihood framework (Natarajan et al., 2022; Scoones, 2015b), which emphasizes the importance of access to livelihood assets and income diversification in promoting resilience among vulnerable groups, particularly female-headed households as reported by Mohammed and Favretto (2025); Nyathi (2025); Shahin et al. (2022).

Findings further revealed a direct relationship between food production levels and household food security. Families with limited access to land and agricultural inputs experienced food insecurity, nutritional deficiencies, and financial strain. This is consistent with Ashagidigbi et al. (2017)who reported that 59.1% of female-headed households in Abuja, Nigeria, were food insecure due to inadequate access to productive resources. Conversely, a contrasting study by Ibeagwa et al. (2020) in Imo State, Nigeria, found that female-headed households were more food secure than male-

headed households, suggesting the influence of contextual and socio-cultural factors in shaping food security outcomes. Whereas there are two contrasting scenarios, a significant part of literature have point out to the fact that female-headed households tend to experience food insecurity owing to limited access to factors of production particularly land and access to credit (Businge et al., 2018b; Getawey, 2023; Mpuuga et al., 2021: Mwaura, 2022; Oburu et al., 2024).

The current study also found that food production significantly predicts socioeconomic livelihood outcomes for female-headed households, including access to healthcare, education, and housing as indicated in Table 4.8. this finding concur with Businge et al. (2018b); Rwangire and Kabeba Muriisa (2021) who expressed that subsistence and commercial agriculture are critical income sources, although structural barriers such as gendered power relations, land ownership restrictions, and limited access to agricultural finance and extension services continue to undermine women's productivity and decision-making autonomy. These views are shared by Nyakato et al. (2020) who emphasized that decision making over land and utilization rests in the hands of men, leaving females at a disadvantage in rural southwestern Uganda. Looking at the current findings and the views from the previous studies, it is clear that females are still lagging behind in terms of land utilization, especially when it comes to food production, an issue that affects mainly the female-headed households.

Despite these constraints, the resilience of female-headed households remains evident as presented in Table 4.8. Engagement in food production enables them to reduce food expenditures, improve household dietary patterns, and generate income through the sale of surplus produce as emphasized in Table 4.8. These dynamics not only improve immediate welfare but also contribute to long-term economic resilience. As Schling and Pazos (2024) observe, proceeds from agricultural activities are often reinvested in education, healthcare, and housing, thus advancing household welfare

beyond subsistence. This ultimately determine the overall livelihoods of the household, an indication that in the absence of agriculture harvests most families may not attain reasonable livelihoods, female-headed ones being the most affected in this cohort.

The results indicate that while gendered power relations independently influence the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households, a substantial portion of this influence operates through food production as a mediating factor (Refer to Table 4.11). These findings are consistent with previous studies which have established that gender equity in access to and control over productive resources significantly improves household welfare, both directly and through enhanced agricultural outcomes. For instance, Ndagire (2021b) and Njuki et al. (2023) report that empowering women in decision-making and resource management leads to higher farm productivity, which in turn strengthens food security, income, and health outcomes.

Similarly, Agarwal (1998) and Kabeer (2018) argue that when women have greater autonomy in agricultural production, households experience improved economic resilience and reduced vulnerability to shocks. The partial mediation observed in this study aligns with these scholars' conclusions, suggesting that while gendered power relations exert a strong direct influence on livelihoods, their impact is amplified when women's empowerment is translated into tangible improvements in food production. This underscores the importance of integrating gender-transformative approaches with agricultural development interventions to achieve sustainable livelihood gains among female-headed households.

The mediating role of food production in shaping the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households is both significant and multidimensional. Enhancing women's access to land, inputs, markets, and financial services is essential to maximizing the transformative potential of

agriculture. Policy interventions should thus address structural inequalities while promoting inclusive agricultural development strategies that empower female-headed households to attain sustainable livelihoods.

5.2 Conclusion

This study presents findings from a cross-sectional survey conducted in Mbarara district among female-headed households. The study found that there is a strong positive relationship between gendered power relations and food production in Mbarara district. This indicates that gendered power relations have a significant influence on food production among female-headed households in Mbarara district of southwestern Uganda.

The study found indications of food unavailability among female-headed households as a significant number of respondents indicated that they do not eat food they want due to food unavailability, eating some kind of food over a long period of time, access challenges and unhappiness due to food unavailability. It was further established that age and education level significantly influence socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households. This implies that socio-demographic variables of age and education have a strong bearing on how food production influences socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara district.

The study also established that there a significant positive correlation between gendered power relations and socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara district. This implies that any positive change towards gendered power relations, it improves socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed-households in Mbarara district.

The study further established that food production positively predicts socioeconomic livelihoods among female-headed-households in Mbarara district. These findings confirm that food production

influences socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara district. All the dimensions of food production have a positive significant relationship with socioeconomic livelihoods female-headed households in Mbarara District.

From the Sustainable Livelihood Approach, the present study found that women in female-headed households have limited access and control towards factors of production particularly land, access to credit and control over produce harvested. This confirms that they have limitations towards achieving socioeconomic livelihoods for their families, an indication that the socioeconomic livelihoods are compromised by this situation. Faced with a challenge of decision-making power, resource access, and division of labor within these households, female-headed households have a challenge to attain reasonable socioeconomic livelihoods. On the other hand,

From the perspective of Power Relations Theory, the study found the assumption puts a male gender in a superscript position, placing females at a disadvantage in the African setting still abundant in Mbarara district. From the study, it was found out that in as much as females head these families, there is an invisible gendered power aspect from the extended and to some extent from the male children within that household set up. From the outlook, the family presents as female-headed yet, decision making and control over important resources is limited and anchored in some other male members in the extended family system. This affects food production, which incidentally has a bearing on socioeconomic livelihoods of these families.

The present study is in line with both Sustainable Livelihood Approach and Gender Relations Theory in explaining how the rights to utilize resources and negotiate from the gender perspective affects socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households. It was found out that patriarchal practices rooted in the social construction of gender relations in the home, compromises females'

ability to utilize fully the resources in food production and this places families at the risk of acute food scarcity and overall socioeconomic livelihoods since these families largely depend on food production as a source of livelihood.

5.3 Researcher's Contribution to the Body of Knowledge

The findings from this study hold critical implications for policy, necessitating a reorientation of interventions to prioritize food production factors, given their consequential impact on socioeconomic livelihoods at household level. Additionally, the study highlights the moderating role of socio-demographic variables particularly age and education as significant predictors of livelihood outcomes in the context of food production among female-headed households. By explaining these relationships, the research provides policymakers with empirically grounded insights to refine gender-sensitive interventions, thereby enhancing the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households. This contribution not only extends existing theoretical frameworks but also offers actionable recommendations for sustainable development programmes and overall national development initiatives aimed at poverty eradication in rural communities of Uganda.

5.4 Recommendations

It was found out that females, though heads of the families, have no absolute rights on land utilization and harvested produces in the home. This is an indication that there is absence of equality and empowerment among women in Mbarara district. This calls for advocacy and sensitization by civil society organizations and government agencies focused on improving community development at family level.

There is a need to advocate for women empowerment to improve their status in decision making at family level. For the last three decades, the Government of Uganda and its partners in

development have invested a lot in gender mainstreaming but the gaps are still existing as have been revealed by the current study. This calls for new approaches to tackle this challenge that has persisted for so long.

There is a need to enhance the agency of women to participate in asset ownership and household economic decision making, expanding female literacy and education, and diversifying income sources to include off-farm wage employment in Mbarara District.

It was found out that food production predicts socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara district, to a greater extent. This revelation calls for programs and policies aimed at supporting and empowering women in agriculture. Accordingly, this study shows that when these females are supported in terms of agriculture production, the socioeconomic livelihoods of their homes will automatically improve. This ultimately predicts community socioeconomic development of Mbarara district and Uganda in general.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

This study looked at gender relations, food production, and socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District. From the current findings, there is a need to conduct further studies to bridge these gaps;

1. The influence of sociodemographic variables particularly age and education on socioeconomic livelihoods of female headed households.
2. How collaboration and decision-making influences socioeconomic livelihoods female headed households.
3. A phenomenological analysis on the factors affecting decision making on land utilization by female household heads.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Morgan and Krejcie Sample Size Table (Revised Edition):

N	*S*	*N*	*S*	*N*	*S*	*N*	*S*	*N*	*S*
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	20000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	100000	384

SOURCE: From R. V. Krejcie and D. W. Morgan, "Determining Sample Size for Research Activities," *Education and Psychological Measurement*, *30*, p. 608, copyright © 1970 Sage Publications, Inc., Reprinted by permission of Sage Publications, Inc.

(Krejcie & Morgan, 1970)

Appendix II: Selection of Key informants

S/N	Respondents	Target Population	Enrolled participants
1.	Local government	7	5
2.	CSOs	3	2
3.	District technical staff	3	3
4.	Total	13	10

Appendix III: Household survey Questionnaire

I am **Mukundane Charles Godfrey**, a student of Mbarara University of Science and Technology am carrying research on **"Gendered power relations, food production and socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District."** You have been randomly selected to participate in this study and your participation is voluntary. Any information given will be dealt with great confidentiality and shall be used for purposes of the study and reference purposes. You are free to or not to participate at any stage. A questionnaire will be given to you and I will be glad to explain where you will not understand. Thank you.

Part A. Demographic characteristics of the respondents. (Circle appropriately).

1 . What is your age bracket?

a) 18-30 c) 41-50

b) 31-40 d) 51 and above

2. What is your gender?

(a) Male (b) Female

3. What is your marital status?

(a) Single (b) Married.

c) Divorced d) Widowed

4. How many people are you in this household?.....

5. What is your current occupation?

.....

6. What is your education level?

a) O level b) A level.

c) Diploma d) Degree.

e) Others (disclose) .....

7. Do you own land: Yes No

8. Size of the land owned.....

9. If yes, what is the status of registration.....

10. Quantity of harvests last season.....

11. Animal Husbandry: Cattle Poultry Piggery

Any other.....(Specify)

Please choose option (s) that suits your level of agreement for each of the following questions. The options are:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Section B: How gendered power relations has affected food production among female-headed households

S/N	How gendered power relations has affected food production among female-headed households	1	2	3	4
1	Females have access to land for food production				
2	Females greatly mobilize resources like planting materials				
3	My old male children are the ones who decide where/how I should use the land				
4	Females have control over resources in food production				
5	My in-laws are the ones who decide where crops should be grown and which crops to grow.				
6	Females in this household collaborate with males in food production				
7	Both females and males are actively involved in land preparation for food production in our household.				

8	Females are more involved in all stages of food production more than men				
9	Crop growing is to females as animal husbandry is to males in our household				
10	Females participate in land use planning more than males.				
11	Females compared to their male counterparts determine food for sale and food for home consumption.				
12	Females do not have a say on what crops to grow or what livestock to keep in the household.				

Section C: How gendered power relations has affected socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households

SN	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Respecting gender roles at household level, has increased household income					
2	Limited access to land has affected my household income					
3.	Having control over resources has increased food security in my household.					
4.	Planning together as a household has increase our family social wellbeing					
5.	Working together as family has increased the health status of our household					
6.	Participating in financing decisions has increased our household income					
7.	Joint decision making has helped us to increase sustainable use of resources					
8.	Involvement of both male and female in decision of food production has promoted household food security					

Section D: The mediating effect of food production on socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households

S/N	Items	1	2	3	4
1.	We get high yields from what we farm as a household each season				
2	The quantity of food harvested has helped us to increase household income				

3	The quality and quantity of food processes have enabled us save income and invest				
4.	Our harvests are sufficient and can take us up to the next harvesting period				
	In growing food crops, we put into consideration sustainable use of resources				
5.	Sometimes we eat one particular kind of food quite long due to lack of options				
6.	Sometimes we skip a meal due to food inadequacies				
7.	In some seasons, the household struggles to get food which affects our health				
8.	We are able to produce enough food and give surplus to the relatives and friends				
9.	When we sale the surplus food after harvests, we purchase those we don't grow				
10.	Sufficient food production has promoted our social well-being.				

Appendix IV: Interview guide for Interview guide for Local Leaders

Objective One: How gendered power relations has affected food production among female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. What is the situation like for female-headed households in this area?
2. In order to produce food, families have to have resources like land and labour, how easy or hard do female-headed households find to access these resources?
3. What are some of the poor relations related to gender among female-headed households in this area?

Objective Two: The mediating effect of food production on socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. What are some of the challenges associated to access to resources like land and finance while practicing farming?
2. How do you rate the level of livelihoods in female-headed households in this community?

Objective Three: How gendered power relations has affected socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. How do men and women relate among female-headed households in these communities?
2. What are some of the challenges related to livelihoods like food security among female-headed households in these communities?
3. Do you have any other comment regarding this subject?

Thank you for your time

Appendix V: Interview Guide for Key informant

Objective One: How gendered power relations has affected food production among female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. What is the situation like for female-headed households in this area?
2. How do you find a situation of access to resources in families headed by females in this community?
3. What are some of the challenges related to family power struggles among female-headed households?

Objective Two: The mediating effect of food production on socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. What are some of the challenges associated to access to resources like land and finance while practicing farming?
2. How do you rate the level of livelihoods in female-headed households in this community?

Objective Three: How gendered power relations has affected socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. How do men and women relate among female-headed households in these communities?
2. What are some of the challenges related to livelihoods like food security among female-headed households in these communities?
3. How do you compare the livelihoods of female-headed households and those other families headed by males in terms of livelihoods in this community?
4. Do you have any other comment regarding this subject?

Thank you for your time

Appendix VI: Interview Guide for Civil society representatives

Objective One: How gendered power relations has affected food production among female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. In your work life, how have you encountered the gendered power relations among female-headed households?
2. Have you experienced any unique situation regarding access to resources among female-headed households?
3. What are some of the challenges related to family power struggles among female-headed households?

Objective Two: The mediating effect of food production on socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. What are the challenges associated to access to resources like land and finance while practicing farming?
2. How do you rate the level of livelihoods in female-headed households in this community?

Objective Three: How gendered power relations has affected socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. How do men and women relate among female-headed households in these communities?
2. What are some of the challenges related to livelihoods like food security among female-headed households in these communities?
3. How do you compare the livelihoods of female-headed households and those other families headed by males in terms of livelihoods in this community?
4. Do you have any other comment regarding this subject?

Thank you for your time

Appendix VII: Interview Guide for Members of Cooperative Societies

Objective One: How gendered power relations has affected food production among female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. From your community knowledge, how do you find gendered power relations among female-headed households in this area?
2. Do female-headed households have any issues concerning access to resources and utilization?
3. Have you witnessed any challenges surrounding gendered power relations among female-headed households?

Objective Two: The mediating effect of food production on socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. Is there any challenge associated with food production among female-headed households in this community?
2. Do these families have any challenges associated to access to resources like land and finance while practicing farming?
3. How do you rate the level of livelihoods in female-headed households in this community?

Objective Three: How gendered power relations has affected socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. How do men and women relate among female-headed households in these communities?
2. Is there any challenge related to livelihoods like food security among female-headed households in these communities?
3. Do you have any other comment regarding this subject?

Thank you for your time

Appendix VIII: Interview Guide Ministry Staff

Objective One: How gendered power relations has affected food production among female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. What is your knowledge and experience regarding gendered power relations among female-headed households in Mbarara district? *(Discuss from the data available at the Ministry)*
2. How do find the situation of access to resources and utilization among female-headed households in Mbarara district? *(According to reports available)*
3. Have you received any reports regarding conflicts related to gender struggles for power in these homes?
4. How do you find the socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara district?

Objective Two: The mediating effect of food production on socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. Is there any challenge associated with food production among female-headed households in Mbarara district?
2. Do these families have any challenges associated to access to resources like land and finance while practicing farming?
3. Do have any record of socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara district? *(Give some highlights)*

Objective Three: How gendered power relations has affected socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Mbarara District

1. According to the reports on your desk, how do men and women relate among female-headed households in these communities?
2. Have you recorded any challenge related to livelihoods like food security among female-headed households in these communities?
3. Do you have any other comment regarding this subject?

Thank you for your time

IX: Ebibuzo Byo'runyankore

Nibanyeta **Mukundane Charles Godfrey**, omwegi ahitendekyero erya Mbarara Univasite ndiyo nikora okucondoza ahabikwatirine nenkoragana yabashaija nabakazi omumirimo yobuhingi noburisa omumaka nkokubirikuretaho embera etari emwe nemwe. Noshabwa kwetaba omukucondoza oku otagyemirwe. Ebyaragambe nibwija kukumwa nka ebihaama. Nobasa kwetaba omukucondoza oku narishi orekye. Noshabwa kushoma ebibuzo ebi okabyetegyereza otakabigarukiremu. Yebare

Part A. Abirikukukwataho nkomuntu

1 . Emayaka yawe

a) 18-30 c) 51-60

b) 31-40 d) 60+

2. Omushaija/omukazi

(a) Omushaija (b) Omukazi

3. Ebyobushwere

(a) Tinkashwire (b) Nyine omushaija/omukazi

c) Tukatana d) Akafa

4. Omuri egiika murimu bangahi?.....

5. Mbwenu hati nokora murimoki?

.....

6. Okashoma ekyakangahi?

a) Siniya yakana b) Siniya yamukaga

c) Dipuroma d) diguri

e) Ebindi .....

7. Noshooma diini ki?

a) Omukurisito

b) Omusiramu

c) Owanchwanga

d) Mungu mwema

7. Oine eitaka ririkwinganaki.....

8. Oine eitaka: Yego ☐ Ngaha ☐

9. Kworabe oine eitaka reine ekyapa.....

10. Okasharura birikwinganaki sizoni eyahwaire.....

11. Otungire enyamishwa: Ente enkoko Empunu

Ebindi.....(Shoborora)

Kyebera omukabokisi akarimu enshonga eyorikwikirizana nayo

Nimpakanira kimwe	tindikwikiriza	obundi	ninyikiriza	Ninyiririza kimwe
1	2	3	4	5

Ekichweka B: Enkoragana yabashija nabakazi netwariza eta ebyobuhingi noburisa omumaka agarikwemberwa abakazi

Enamba	Enkoragana yabashija nabakazi netwariza eta ebyobuhingi noburisa omumaka agarikwemberwa abakazi	1	2	3	4	5
1	Abashaija nabakazi omuka omu nibakwatanisa omukuhinga					
2	Abashaija nabakazi omuka omu nibakorera hamwe omukuhinga					
3	Ebyokurya ebiturikuhinga nibiribwa eka yoona okutwarira hamwe					
4	Abashaija nabakazi omuka omu baine orusa rwokukoseza eitaka					
5	Abisiki nabasigazi omuka egi baine nebijumbira omukuhinga					
6	Bakuru bekiika nibo barikusharamu omubaine akakwate nokukozesa eitaka					
7	Abakazi nibabasa kuhinga kwonka tibaine bushoborozi ahitaka					

8	Abakazi nibakora kihango omukuhinga					
9	Nyineka niwe aine obushoborozi oburikukirayo ahitaka omuka omu					

Ekichweka C: Oku okuhinga ebyokurya omuka birikuretaho obugwagye omumaka agarikwebemberwa abakazi

Eshura	**Ebibuzo**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1.	Okubaho kwebyokurya nibwo busingye omuka					
2.	Obundi nimba nyerarikirire nti nitwija kuburya ebyokurya ahabwibura rye`sente omuka					
3.	Hariho obumurikubura kurya kurungi ahabwokubura esente kugura ebyokurya					
4.	Obwire obwingi niturya omuryo gumwe ahabwesente kubura					
5.	Obundi nitusibiraho, turya nka kyakiro yonka					
6.	Tindikutunga ebyokurya ebindikukunda obwire obwingi					
7.	Omu sizoni ezimwe ebyokurya nibibura munonga					
8.	Ebyokurya kubirikubura abakazi bagubya kubi					
9.	Nitusharura ebyokurya bingi tuherezaho nabatahi hamwe nabanyabuzare					
10.	Enshagye nitugiguza twihamu esente zituyamba ahaka					

Ekichweka D: Oku enkoragana yabashaija nabakazi arikuhindura omuntura yeeka

Eshura	**Ebibuzo**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1.	Kuturikuheza kusharura abashaija emisharuro bagyegarurira					
2.	Abakazi nibo barikuteka					
3.	Abashaija nibo barikusharamu abiratekwe					

4.	Emisharuro netegyekwa abashaija kwonka okuteka nokwabakazi					
5.	Abashaija nibo barikugura ebyokurya habaho ekyetengo					
6.	Ebyokurya byoona ebituri kurya byoona nibihingwa omumisiri ya ahaka					
7.	Nyineka yaba atariho tutukateka					
8.	Nyineka niwe aine kutuha empiha zokugura ebyokurya omuka					
9.	Abashaija nabakazi omuka omu nibo barikureta empiha zokugura ebyokurya omuka omu					

Ekichweka X: Ebibuzo byaba nyineka

1 Tugambireho omubine akakwate nokwebembera eka ahagati yabashaija nabakazi omuka omu? (Nitukimanya kurungi ngu eka egi neyemberwa omukazi kwonka harimu abasigazi bakuru abaine ekibarikubasa kugamba nkabantu bakuru).

2 Nimuhinga kandi mutunga muta ebyokurya omuka egi? (Nimwehingira, mukozesa abakozi nari muri omubigombe byokuhingirana).

3 Oine obuzibu obworikutunga omukuhinga nokurisa (Ekizibu eki kiine akakwate nobugabe omunkozesa yeitaka)?

4 Emiturire yanyu omuka omu neshushaki (Nimutunga ebytengo byoona, mwine emikago, nimuganira kurungi, biribita?).

5 Kuharikubura ebyokurya musisirwaki omuka egi?

6 Oine ekindi ekiwaba noyenda kubuza ahamuramwa ogu?

Yebare munonga ahabwobwire bwaawe

Ekicweka XI: Ebibuzo byabahangu

Omutwe Gwokubanza: Oku enkoragana yabashaija nabakazi erikuteganisa obuhingi noburisa omumaka agarikwebemberwa abakazi

1. Enshonga zamaka agarikwemberwa abakazi zirizita omukichweka eki?
2. Okutunga ebyokuzesa omumaka agarikwebemberwa abashaija nabakazi omukichweka eki byemereire biita?
3. Nokira kushangamu okusika omuguha omumaka agarikwebemberwa abakazi omkichweka eki?
4. Ebyentasya byabo byemereire bita?

Omutwe gwakabiiri: Ebyokuhinga nokurisa nibihindura biita emiturire yabantu omumaka agarikwebemberwa abashaija nabakazi omukichweka eki

1. Amaka agarikwebemberwa abashaija nabakazi nigashanga buzibuki omukuhinga nokurisa?
2. Amaka aga gaine obuzibu obukwatiraine nokutunga ebyokukozesa omumaka gabo?
3. Emiturire yamaka aga eryeta waba nogyeragyeranisa?

Omutwe gwakashatu: Enkoragana yabashaija nabakazi omumaka agarikwebemberwa abakazi eyemereire eta

1. Abashaija nabakazi omumaka agarikwebemberwa abakazi eyemereire eta omukichweka eki?
2. Nogira ngu baine obuzibu omubikwatiraine nokutunga ebyokurya nebindi ebyokuzesa ahaka?
3. Emiturire yamaka agarikwebemberwa abakazi negyeragyeranisibwa eta namaka agandi omukichweka eki?
4. Oine ekindi ekiwaba noyenda kubuza ahamuramwa ogu?

Yebare munonga ahabwobwire bwawe

Appendix XII: Informed Consent- English Version

MBARARA UNIVERSITYOF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
P.O. Box 1410 Mbarara, Tel:+256-48-543-3795, Fax: +256-48-542-07
E-mail:irc@must.ac.ug, mustirb@gmail.com

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This document outlines the research study and expectations for potential participants. It should be written in layman terms and typed on MUST-REC letterhead.

Instructions

The wording of this document should be directed to the potential participant not MUST-REC.

If a technical term must be used, then define it the first time it is used and any acronyms or abbreviations used should be spelled out the first time they are used.

All the sections of this document must be completed without any editing or deletions.

Please use a typing font that is easily distinguishable from the questions of this form. Preferably the font size should be 12.

Study title – This should be the same as on all other documents related to the study.

Gendered power relations, food production and socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Ankole region

Principal Investigator(s)
Mukundane Charles Godfrey

Introduction
What you should know about this study:

You are being asked to join a research study.

This consent form explains the research study and your part in the study.

Please read it carefully and take as much time as you need.

You are a volunteer. You can choose not to take part and if you join, you may quit at any time. There will be no penalty if you decide to quit the study.

Brief background to the study
This study will examine how gendered power relations influence food production and socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Ankole Region. It will specifically look at how gendered power relations has affected food production among female-headed

households, the mediating effect of food production on socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households and how gendered power relations has affected socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Ankole Region. The study will undertake a post positivist research paradigm to examine the phenomenon under investigation. A sample size of 186 respondents will be randomly Mbarara district. Data will be collected using both questionnaire and interview methods of data collection. Data analysis will be conducted using both Quantitative and Qualitative Methods. The research team will observe ethics including Informed consent, confidentiality, privacy and rights of the research participants involved in this study.

Purpose of the research project

Include a statement that the study involves research, estimated number of participants, an explanation of the purpose(s) of the research procedure and the expected duration of the subject's participation. This study will examine the gendered power relations, food production and the livelihoods of female-headed households in Ankole Region. The study will look at how gendered power relations in homes and families affects food production among families headed by females and how this affects their livelihoods in the long run. Aware that land is a major factor in food production, there is always a contention on who controls the land in the family. In the absence of the male female head, traditionally, an older male takes precedence and if all the males are minors, the female head takes precedence but with some powers in the hands of the extended family. This has for long been a source of contention among families in rural communities. This study seeks to investigate the access to resources, access to finance and the decision making on resources and how they affect food production and eventually livelihoods of female-headed households in Ankole Region.

Why you are being asked to participate?

Explain why you have selected the individual to participate in the study.

Your being asked to participate in this study because you're a Ugandan aged 18 above living in Ankole region in a family headed a female. Your requested to provide information on how gendered power relations affect food production and livelihoods of people living in female-headed households. The information you will provide here will help in identifying the challenges affecting the livelihoods of people living in female-headed in terms of access to resources, finance and decision making while undertaking food production. These answers will eventually help to design policy intervention aimed at streamlining the livelihoods of people living in female-headed households.

Procedures

Provide a description of the procedures to be followed and identification of any procedures that are experimental, clinical etc. If there is need for storage of biological (body) specimens, explain why, and include a statement requesting for consent to store the specimens and state the duration of storage.

This study is non-clinical in nature and therefore these procedures are not applicable.

Risks or discomforts

Describe any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts-physical, psychological, social, legal or other associated with the procedure, and include information about their likelihood and seriousness. Discuss the procedures for protecting against or minimizing any potential risks to the subject. Discuss the risks in relation to the anticipated benefits to the subjects and to society.

We do not anticipate any risks or discomfort during the interview. However, we also realize that vulnerable subjects can be addressed during the conversation. We do not probe for sensitive questions relating to gendered power relations in the home. Everything you share is on what you deem important. We are here to listen to your experience. However, should you feel any discomfort during the interview, please let us know, and we will discuss solutions for how to proceed. In case you are uncomfortable with answering some questions, we shall not insist to get an answer.

Benefits

Describe any benefits to the subject or other benefits that may reasonably be expected from the research. If the subject is not likely to benefit personally from the experimental protocol note this in the statement of benefits.

You will not receive any direct benefits from participation in this study. You will also have the opportunity to influence the research and share your perception on how the livelihoods of female-headed households' situation can be improved.

Incentives or rewards for participating

It is assumed that there are no costs to subjects enrolled in research protocols. Any payments to be made to the subject, e.g., travel expenses, token of appreciation for time spent, must also be stated, including when the payment will be made.

There are no incentives or rewards to your enrolled in these research protocols. Should you choose not to participate, there are no consequences whatsoever. We shall choose the next available respondent. However, you will be given 5,000 Ugandan shillings as compensation for your time.

Protecting data confidentiality

Provide a statement describing the extent, if any, to which confidentiality or records identifying the subjects will be maintained. If data is in form of tape recordings, photographs, movies or videotapes, researcher should describe period of time they will be retained before destruction. Showing or playing of such data must be disclosed, including instructional purposes.

If you participate in an interview with us, we will treat all information about you confidentially. No information we receive about you will under any circumstances be passed on to any national authorities, or organization or others. If we were to draw on your stories when we write, we will

make up fictive names, and change small details in your story, so that no one will be able to know that this was your story.

Protecting subject privacy during data collection
Describe how the privacy of the participant will be ensured during the process of data collection.

The interviews will take place in a quiet place without an audience. We will ensure your privacy and have a continuous dialogue with you thought the interview. If you have any feedback, please let us know. The interview is on your terms, not ours. We seek to facilitate that this is a process you are comfortable with.

Right to refuse or withdraw

Include a statement that participation is voluntary and that refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.

Participation in the study is voluntary and you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving any reason No one other than the researchers involved in the project will know if you have participated and nobody will be able to know what you have told us. If you withdraw, all information about you will be deleted.

What happens if you leave the study?

Include a statement that the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

If you withdraw, all information about you will be deleted, and your withdrawal will not have any consequences for you.

Who do I ask/call if I have questions or a problem? Include contact for the researcher and Chairperson, MUST-REC.

Assoc. Prof. Paul Alele

Chairman, MUST-REC

P.O. Box 1410 Mbarara

Tel: 0485433795/0773573372

Or

Survey Principal Investigator

Mukundane Charles Godfrey

On: 0706187400

What does your signature or thumbprint on this consent form mean?

Your signature on this form means

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks

You have been given the chance to ask questions before you sign

You have voluntarily agreed to be in this study

Name of adult participant	Signature/Thumbprint of participant/ Parent/Guardian/Next of Kin	Date
Name of person obtaining consent	Signature	Date
Print Name of witness	Signature or thumbprint or mark	Date

Appendix XIII: Informed Consent- Runyankore Version

MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 1410 Mbarara, Tel: +256-48-543-3795, Fax: +256-48-542-0782

E-mail:irc@must.ac.ug, mustirb@gmail.com

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Ekihandiko eki nikishoborora ebiri omukucondoza oku hamwe nebiri kutekatekwa kuruga omubantu abrikuza kwejumbamu. Nikitekwa kuhandikwa omumuringo ogurikushoborekyera buryomwe ahabaruha eriho ekyapa kyabakuru bokucondoza omu eitendekyero erikuru erya Mbarara univasite.

Engyenderwaho

Okushoborora okuri omukihandiko eki nikutekwa kushoborera omuntu orikuza kwetaba omukucondoza oku.

Kuhakubaho okukozesa ebigambo ebyobuhangu narishi ebihandikirwe omubugufu, nibitekwa kushobororwa omubwijire kwenda kukyensa omuntu ogwe orikuza kwetaba omukucondoza oku.

Obuchweka bwoona oburi omukihandiko eki bwoona bwaine kwijuzibwa hatariho okushangura narishi okuhinduramu.

Kozesa enyiguta eziri kwahukanaho nebibuzo ebirikubuzibwa aha.

Omutwe gwokucondoza – Gwaine kushushana nkokuguhandikire omubihandiiko byoona abaine akakwate nokucondooza oku.

Gendered power relations, food production and socioeconomic livelihoods of female-headed households in Ankole region

Omucondoza Mukuru

Mukundane Charles Godfrey

Entandikiro

Ebyoyine kumanya ahamushomo gwokucondoza

Noshabwa kwetaaba omumushomo gwokucondoza.

Ekihandiko eki nikishoborora ebikwatireine ahakwetaba kwawe omumushomo ogu

Okishome nobwegyendesereza kandi okihe obwire okyengye

Nohereza obuyambi omumushomo ogu. Toratungye kibonerezo waheza kusharaho kutetaaba omumushomo gwokucondooza oku, nobasa kurugamu ayiwayendera eshaha yoona. Toratungye kubonerezibwa washaraho kurugamu obwire bwoona.

Bikye ahabirikukwata ahakucondoza oku

Okucondoza oku kugyendereire kureba ahabwaki enkoragana ya'bashaija na'bakazi omumaka omubaine akakwate nokuhinga nibiretaho biita empinduka omumiturire ya'bantu omumaka omubiichweka bya Ankole. Nitwija kuba nitureba munonga ahankwatanisa yabashaija nabakazi omumaka oku erikuhwera narishi kuteganisa omunkora yobuhingi noburisa omumaka. Namunonga nitwija kureba oku enshonga erikutwazibwa omumaka agarikwebemberwa abakyara omuri Nkore. Nitwija kukozesa emiringo ebiiro yokutunga amakuru agari omukucondoza, ogumwe nitwija kubuuza twecumintirize kandi ebirarugye omukucondoza tuhandikye amaraka gaabo abaratuhe amakuru. Ogundi muringo, nitwija kubara amaraka gaabo nenshonga zaabo ezibarahereze. Emiringo yombi neija kuzebwa kuhwerahwerana omukuha amakuru agaigutsi omubikwatiraine nokucondoza oku. Abantu barikwingana 218 nibaija kurondwa omu disiturikiti eza Mbarara, Isingiro na Bushenyi kwetaba omukucondoza oku. Nibaija kushabwa kwetaba omukucondoza oku betaine kugyemeserezibwa.

Ekigyenderwa kyokucondoza oku

Omu harimu ekigendererwa kikuru kyokucondoza, omuhendo gwabakuza kwetabamu, okushoborora ekindererwa, obwire obukurikuza kutwara hamwe nemitendera erikuza kukuratirwa.

Okucondoza oku nikwija kureba ahamiturire yabashaija nabakazi omumaka nokubarikuhwerana omukukora emirimo eine akakwate nokuhinga hamwe nokurisa omubichweka bya Nkore. Namunonga nitwija kureba ahamaka agari kwebemberwa abakazi omubichweka ebi kandi omunshonga egi. Amaka agarikwebemberwa abakazi nigakira kuba gaine ekizibu kya eibura ryebyokurya, nikyo kireiteire twagira ngu katurebe omunshonga egi kandi tugicondoze. Omuri eki nitwija kureba okubarikutunga ebyokuzesa nka eitaka, esente hamwe nokubarikusharamu kubikozesa.

Ahabwaki noshabwa kwetaba omukucondoza oku?

Noshabwa kwetaba omukucondoza oku ahabwokuba ori omunya Uganda kandi oine emyaka 18 yobukuru arikutura omuka erikwebemberwa omukazi. Noija kutuhereza amakuru againe nakakwate noku amaka aga garikutwaza obuhingi noburisa. Eki nikiza kutuyamba omukumanya ebizibu ebirimu, tubase kutaho omuringo gwokubimaraho.

Engyenderwaho:

Noshabwa kugarukamu ebibuzo ebigyenderirwe kumanya ebikwatirine nemikorere yebibiina byabakyara omukubiika hamwe nokweguza omuri Kashari, Mbarara disiturikiti. Okuganira kweitu hamwe naiwe nikwija kutwara endakiika 45 kuhika aha shaha 1. Noyikizibwa kugarukamu

ebibuzo ebyorikubasa kandi okareka ebyo ebyotabasa. Wayenda kurekyeraho kwejumbira omukucondoza norekyeraho. Okuganira kweitu niwe nikwija kubaho omumwanya ogworayotoranire. Ninkushaba kuwakubasa nobasa kumpereza bimwe ahabihandiiko ebirimurikuzesa. Eki kiryahakukundaka kwawe kubasa kumpereza ebihandiiko ebi.

Obuziibu oburi omukucondoza oku

Okuganira oku nikubasa kutwara bumwe ahabwaire kandi obutarashashurwe. Ebibuzo ebimwe nibibasa kwimutsya amakuru gamwe ogatarikukunda kuhurira. Kwonka torikugyemeserizibwa kugarikamu burikibuzo, oyiine obushoboroza kuruga omukucondoza oku eshaha yoona. Ebitura ganaire naiwe nibyija kuguma ahagati yeitu naiwe kandi eiziina ryawe tiraine ahairirayorekwe.

Ebirungi:

Okwejumba kwawe omukucondoza oku nikwija kuretaho amakuru gomutaano gwakwatireine nebibiina byabakyara byokweguza nokubiika ekyakubasa kweija kuretaho empinduuka omumikorere yebibiina ebi obwe turikuronda omubaazi gwebiziibu ebirimu. Ebirarugyemu nibyija kukozebwa omukutera omuranga kwoguhindura omungyendwaraho zebibiina byabakyara byokubiika nokweguza.

Akasiimo kokwetaba omukucondoza

Tiharebeho okushashurwa ahabwokwejumba omukucondoza oku kwonka nahabasa kwija kubaho okuherezibwa efunguro rwagati yekiganiro kyeitu.

Okukuma ebihama

Ebyoratugambaire omukucondoza nibyeija kukumwa enkanama hatariho kubigambaira omuntu ondaijo weena. Ebirarugyemu nibyaija kuhandikwa omubitaabo byabahangu kuyamba omumagyezi agasayansi, eizana ryawe nabyoona ebirikukukwataho tibarayorekwe omubihandiko ebi

Okukuma okweherera omubwaire bwokucondoza hamwe nokukunganya entekateka

Okubuzibwa nikwaija kubaho omumwanya gwehereire kandi tiraho omuntu weena orahurire ebiturabe nituganaira, ekigyendererwa nokukuma enaama yeitu.

Obugabe bwokwanga nari kurugamu

Omukucondoza noyija kuba noha obuyambi. Nobasa kusharaho kubuura kwetabaamu narishi orugyemu ahiwayendera hataine ekibireho kyoona.

Ekirikubaaho warugamu?

Okusharaho kwanga nari okarugamu kiri ahariwe kandi niwe orikweshariraho. Oyine obugabe kurugamu eshaha yoona waheeza kusharamu kandi wayenda noyanga kugarukamu ekibuzo nari ebibuzo ebyotakyenga. Tihaine orakutwarekubi ahabwe ensharamu yaawe.

Nimbuza oha nagira oburemezi?

Assoc. Prof. Paul Alele

Chairman, MUST-REC

P.O. Box 1410 Mbarara

Tel: 0485433795/0773573372

Narishi

Omucondoza mukuru

Mukundane Charles Godfrey

Ahasiimu yomungaro: 0706187400

Okusayininga nikimanyisaki?

Ngu wayetegyereza ebirungi nebyo byoona abaine akakwate nokucondoza oku.

Ngu wabuuza kandi wayetegyereza.

Ngu wayikiriza kwetaba omukucondoza oku

Eiziina ryomukuru	omukono gwomujywekyerwa	ebiiro
Eiziina ryowayikiriza kwetaabamu	omukono	ebiiro
Ekinkumu	omukono gwomujurizi	ebiiro

Appendix XIV: Acceptance Letter

C/O Bishop

P.O.BOX 9

Mbarara

1 03 2023

The Resident District Commissioner

Mbarara District.

RE: APPLICATION TO CARRY GUT A RESEARCH STUDY JN MBARARA DISTRICT.

I am carrying out a study on atopic "Gender Power Relations, Food Production and Socioeconomic livelihoods on Female Headed Households in Ankole Region". A case of Mbarara District.

This study will lead to the award of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) of Mbarara University of Science and Technology.

i request your office to give me permission to conduct data collection exercise that will take a period or one month (March 2()23) in Mbarara District.

Attachecl is a copy of the letter from Research Ethical Committee of Mbarara IJnivers1ty of Science and Technology that approved research study exercise.

Thank you,

Yours;

.....

Rev. Mukundane Charles Godfrey

Reg No; 2013/1)hD/013/PS

0775314363

Appendix XV: MUST-REC Approval

Mbarara University of Science & Technology
P. O. Box 1410, Mbarara
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
27 FEB 2024
APPROVED
VALID UNTIL DATE SHOWN ABOVE

27/02/2023

Re: **MUST-2022-703: Gendered Power Relations, Food Production and Socioeconomic Livelihoods of Female Headed Households in Ankole Region, l, 2022-11-14**

I am pleased to inform you that at the 149 convened meeting on 04/11/2022, the MUST Research Ethics Committee, committee meeting, etc voted to approve the above referenced application. Approval of the research is for the period of 27/02/2023 to 27/02/2024.

As Principal Investigator of the research, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approuil.•

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and addenda to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the REC for rereview and approval prior to the activation of the changes.
3. Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or any new information which could change the risk benefit: ratio must be submitted to the REC.
4. Only approved conSent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by participants and/or witnesses should be retained on file. The REC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.
5. Continuing review application must be submitted to the REC eight weeks prior to the e.xpiration date of 27/02/2024 in order to continue the study beyond the approved period. Failure to submit a continuing review application in a timely fashion may result in suspension or termination of the study.
6. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence with the REC of record.
7. You are required to register the research protocol with the Uganda National Council for Science and T'echnology (UNCST) for final clearance to undertake the study in Uganda.

The following is the list of all documents approved in this application by MUST Research Ethics Committee:o. Document Title
lInformed Consent forms ,2 Informed Consent forms

3 Data collection tools

4 Protocol

Yours Sincerely

Assoc. Prof. Paul Alele

For: MUST Research Ethics Committee	Language	Version Number	Version Date
Runyakore	1	2023-01-15 English	1	2022-11-14
Language			
English		2022-1 1-14	
Language			
English	1	2022-11-14	



Appendix XVI: UNCST Clearence



Uganda National Council for Science and Tech

(Established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda)

Our Ref: SS2293ES 21 June 2024

Charles Mukundane

Bishop Stuart University
Mbarara

Re: Research Approval: **Gendered Power Relations, Food Production and Socioeconomic Livelihoods of Female Headed Households in Ankole Region**

I am pleased to inform you that on **21/06/2024**, the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) approved the above referenced research project. The Approval of the research project is for the period of **21/06/2024** to **21/06/2025**.

Your research registration number with the UNCST is **SS2293ES**. Please, cite this number in all your future correspondences with UNCST in respect of the above research project. As the Principal Investigator of the research project, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. Keeping all co-investigators informed of the status of the research.

2. Submitting all changes, amendments, and addenda to the research protocol or the consent form (where applicable) to the designated Research Ethics Committee (REC) or Lead Agency for re-review and approval **prior** to the activation of the changes. UNCST must be notified of the approved changes within five working days.

3. For clinical trials, all serious adverse events must be reported promptly to the designated local REC.for review with copies to the National Drug Authority and a notification to the UNCST.

4. Unanticipated problems involving risks to research participants or other must be reported promptly to the UNCST. New information that becomes available which could change the risk/benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for UNCST notification after review by the REC.

5. Only approved study procedures are to be implemented. The UNCST may conduct impromptu audits of all study records.

6. An annual progress report and approval letter of continuation from the REC must be submitted electronically to UNCST. Failure to do so may result in termination of the research project.

Please note that this approval includes all study related tools submitted as part of the application as shown below:

No.	Document Title	Language	Version Number	Version Da
1	Informed Consent forms	Runyakore	1	15 January
2	Data collection tools	English Language	1	14 Nov 2022
3	Project Proposal	English	1	
4	Approval Letter	English		
5	Administrative Clearance	English		
5	Informed Consent	English	1	13 June 2C
6	Interview Guide Household Heads	English	1	13 June 2C

Yours sincerely,

Hellen Opolot

For: Executive Secretary UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

LOCATION/CORRESPONDENCE

Plot 6 Kimera Road, Ntinda
P.O. Box 6884
KAMPALA, UGANDA

COMMUNICATION

TEL: (256) 414 705500
FAX: (256) 414-234579
EMAIL: info@uncst.go.ug
WEBSITE: http://www.uncst.go

Appendix XVII: Map of Mbarara District

