

An exploration of gender norms and women's empowerment: The case of pig-related businesses in Masaka, Mukono and Mpigi districts in Uganda

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AI	artificial insemination
AP	Agripreneur
CRP	CGIAR Research Program
DCDO	District Community Development Officer
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FG	Focus group discussion
II	Individual interview
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
KII	Key informant interview
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Service
NDA	National Drug Authority
NGO	non-governmental organization
PI	principal investigator
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SAPLING	Sustainable Animal Productivity for Livelihoods, Nutrition, and Gender Inclusion
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics

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Executive summary

Background

The livestock sector plays a key role in the livelihoods of many Ugandans. The pig sub-sector, in particular, has grown over the past few decades and continues to show potential as a provider of quick financial returns amidst rising demand for pork compared to other livestock species.

The CGIAR Research Program on Livestock identified the smallholder pig value chain in Uganda as a high-potential target that could translate research into major interventions which stimulate pro-poor transformation and generate benefits at scale. Various interventions have been implemented to improve livelihoods, incomes and assets of smallholder pig producers (particularly women) sustainably through increased productivity, reduced risk and improved market access. Moreover, the More Pork II project specifically aimed to improve incomes of pig value chain actors through market arrangements and sustainable integrated technology packages in Uganda.

The Ugandan cultural environment within which these interventions have been and are being implemented is largely patriarchal with decision-making mostly predominated by men. Gender norms play a crucial role in all key aspects of the value chain and cannot be overlooked in the implementation and assessment of interventions. The exploration of gender norms provides a basis for assessment of genderness of possible benefits. It can also be used to inform the design of future interventions. It is against this background that the study sought to explore existing norms, especially with regard to pig-related businesses across different nodes of the value chain. Furthermore, the study explored the local understanding of empowerment and factors that constrain or enhance empowerment within the project areas.

Methodology

The study targeted three districts namely, Mukono, Masaka and Mpigi. The More Pork II project had been implemented in Mukono and Masaka initially, while no activities had been implemented in Mpigi. In exploring gender norms, both men and women were targeted as respondents. Using semi-structured questions as guides, focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs) and individual interviews (IIs) were conducted to gather information on gender norms that influence pig-related businesses. The interviews were conducted with individuals directly involved in or knowledgeable about pig-related businesses. They comprised community leaders, cultural leaders, religious leaders, agricultural officers and the pig-related agripreneurs (APs) themselves. A total of 10 FGDs were conducted, and 39 key informants and 21 individuals interviewed.

Key findings

This study sought to explore the nature of pig-related businesses. Preliminary findings highlight activities that men and women engaged in, location of businesses, products sold, labour and transportation. These were described as follows: pork joints, agrovets and feed businesses were often located in urban centres where there is a market, the location of business; men commonly sold pork while women usually prepared and sold salads, motorcycles play a major role in transportation, women farmers preferred to employ men to handle the pigs, male farmers often hired male labour if they owned a farm otherwise, the children and the wife provided most of the labour while the men provided just the feeds; agrovets and feed stockists preferred to employ males for activities such as feed mixing, loading and unloading of materials, while pork joint operators preferred women to do the cooking and cleaning while men did the cutting. There were no noticeable differences across the districts during this preliminary analysis, but these could emerge with further analysis.

In the exploration of norms, there were two levels indicated – one that applied whether the agripreneur was male or female. These norms and perceptions comprised the following: pig aggregators were thought to be poor, always drunk and always near alcohol; aggregators were often insulted as they moved with pigs to the places of slaughter; it was the norm to hit a pig with an axe on the head as a slaughtering process; women were to rear pigs only but could not consume pork; it was thought that neither men nor women could personally transport pork or pigs by motorcycle; some people believed in some traditional deity (amongst the Baganda) and their belief system did not permit pig rearing; taking pigs for mating was reserved for despised men in society often referred to as, 'bisajasaja'¹

There were, however, norms that were prohibitive to women only and in this category, the following were mentioned; a woman should not castrate a piglet; should not clean a pig's reproductive parts; should not slaughter a pig or cut pork at the butchery, should not take a pig to mate, should not construct a pigsty, should not eat pork, should stay at home and prepare meals for her husband, and should not work away from or outside the home.

Because of the norms in place, there were several sanctions against those who did not comply. For the cross-cutting norms, if a man or woman did not comply, they would be ridiculed, would not be trusted and sometimes the clients that came to them would only buy from them on credit and not pay cash. For the norms referenced as affecting women only, there would be name-calling, the woman's children would be referred to by the same trade but using derogatory remarks; the woman's marriage market prospects would fall; the woman's husband loses respect in the community; sometimes her marriage would fail if her husband did not support her for deviating from the norm.

Compliance to the norms was enforced by the husbands, potential male clients, men who approach her for a love relationship, traditional/cultural leaders, religious leaders and the woman's children, especially adolescents. There are, however, instances when women did not face consequences for deviating from the established norms. Examples include when a woman is not married and has to eke out a living all by herself, if she is a widow or if the task is performed by a very young girl.

Although norms can curtail women's engagement in profitable nodes of the value chain, they were not cast in stone and as such, some changes have been observed in pig-related businesses. Pig farming has grown in popularity with more women engaging in production and some venturing further into male-dominated activities. Several factors account for these changes such as engagement by organizations creating awareness amongst smallholder farmers about the potential of pig production as a source of livelihood, the deliberate government stance with women empowerment programs as well as the limited number of white-collar jobs resulting in self-employment with some graduates going into pig-related businesses.

¹ Term used to refer to a man without a worthy standing in the eyes of the community, one that is not worth much respect.

The study also explores the local understanding of empowerment amongst actors. They generally defined empowerment as giving someone or a group of people visibility, raising them along a hierarchy, giving them power and authority to own and make decisions over things as well as building their capacity to achieve.

Introduction

Approximately 80% of agricultural households engage in crop and livestock production, both for own consumption and to generate income (UBOS 2020). Livestock production accounts for about 17% of agricultural value added and 4.3% of GDP (MAAIF 2020). The livestock value chain is expected to grow and transform in order to meet the demand of an increasingly affluent and urbanized population, with an expected increase in the number of market-oriented livestock operations in urban and peri-urban areas (FAO 2021). The sector is characterized as having cattle, goats, pigs, sheep and poultry, in addition to other minor species such as ducks and rabbits (MAAIF-UBOS 2009).

The number of pigs has been increasing significantly over the past four decades (Tatwangire 2014). Atherstone et al. (2019) note that pig keeping has grown in popularity due to the high reproduction rates and rapid weight gain by the animals, coupled with the potential that pigs have to provide quick financial returns and, the rising demand for pork. Most of the pig farming households in Uganda are male-headed with female spouses playing a major role in initiating pig production through purchasing the first stock (Dione et al. 2020).

The CGIAR Research Program on Livestock identified the smallholder pig value chain in Uganda as a high potential target to translate research into major interventions that could stimulate pro-poor transformation and generate benefits at scale. Various interventions have been implemented to improve livelihoods, incomes and assets of smallholder pig producers (particularly for women) sustainably through increased productivity, reduced risk and improved market access. Moreover, the More Pork II project specifically aimed to improve incomes of pig value chain actors through market arrangements and sustainable integrated technology packages in Uganda.

The environment within which these interventions have been and continue to be implemented is largely governed by informal institutions such as gender norms. Fisher et al. (2019) observe that norms may hinder the ability of women to gain awareness on new technologies. Carter et al. (2017) further suggest that societal norms, attitudes, and perceptions may also influence entitlements that household members have over benefits from increased pig productivity due to improved feeding technologies. Theeuwien et al. (2021) while investigating how gendering influences the development of business relationships in the Ugandan agricultural sector, observe that the society is patriarchal with decision-making predominated by men and, gender differences embedded within the culture.

Gender norms thus play a crucial role in all key aspects of the value chain, whether in production or marketing, that results from business relationships and cannot be overlooked in the implementation of interventions. Cislighi and Heise (2018) define social norms as the unwritten rules governing acceptable behaviour in a society or a group, while Cislighi and Heise (2020) suggest that social norms define what is considered normal and acceptable behaviour for the members of that group. Gender norms are a component of social norms.

Norms can take the form of two categories – mores or folkways. Because mores (pronounced mor-ays) are norms that embody the moral views and principles of a group, violating them often results in serious

consequences. Folkways, on the other hand, sometimes known as 'conventions' or 'customs', refer to standards of behaviour that are socially approved but not morally significant. Norms lend some level of certainty to day-to-day life and indeed Hofstede (2001) and House et al. (2004) note that individuals from highly uncertain countries attempt to reduce uncertainty by relying on established social norms, rituals and bureaucratic practices. Viewed as such, norms though helpful in ensuring predictability and stability amongst several aspects, can have a downside of limiting the adoption of new interventions and transformative approaches which could drive societies to better social and development outcomes.

Gender roles often vary. Blackstone (2003) points out that they are based on the different expectations that individuals, groups and societies have of other people based on their sex and each society's values and beliefs about gender. Hemsing and Greaves (2020) suggest that expectations about gender roles often affect and determine the opportunities available across gender, based on culture, place and time. Indeed, for the pig sub-sector in Uganda, Birungi and Ouma (2017) suggest that women dominate the production node of the value chain where they provide most of the labour, while men dominate the marketing node where they have more power over the benefits, with norms identified as a major factor driving this. It is against this background that the study sought to explore gender norms particularly focusing on folkways surrounding men and women's engagement in pig-related enterprises. Given that gender norms are of consequence to empowerment, the study also sought to explore the local understanding of empowerment.

Objectives

The study sought to highlight the conditions under which women-led livestock businesses can be lucrative and supportive of the empowerment of women in these businesses.

In light of the objective, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of existing female-owned/led pig-related businesses?
2. What are the gender norms surrounding women's engagement in pig-related businesses?
3. What are the enabling and constraining factors to women's empowerment in pig-related businesses?

Target value chain actors

Women and men in pig value chain businesses, specifically pig aggregators, drug stockists and veterinary drug stockists. Below are some of the key terms¹ used in this report:

Gender: Refers to roles, expressions, identities, performances, and qualities that are constructed by society and usually assigned to people based on their sex. Gender characteristics can change over time and vary between cultures.

Empowerment: The expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices where they were previously denied this ability.

Societal norms: These are rules of behaviour. They inform group members how to construe a given situation, how to feel about it, and how to behave in it. They can exist as both formal and informal rules of behaviour. Informal norms can be divided into two distinct groups – folkways and mores.

Mores: These give a distinction between right and wrong.

¹ Terms associated with the pig business were adapted from: Ouma, E., Lukuyu, B., Dione, M., Sebatta, C., Namazzi, S. and Lutakome, P. 2021. Pork value chain businesses: A scoping study of pig aggregators, veterinary drug stockists and feed processors in central region, Uganda. Nairobi, Kenya: ILRI.

Folkways: Standards of behaviour that are socially approved but not morally significant.

Gender norms: Socially constructed ideas about how women and men should be and act, or what is considered in a particular social context to be appropriate about gender roles, power relations and standards of behaviour for women and men. Gender norms may also describe how people of a particular gender and age are expected to behave in a given social context.

Farmers: Individuals whose main business is to rear pigs for sale; some farmers may obtain pigs from or refer traders to their neighbours if they receive an order which they are unable to fulfill.

Pig aggregator: Refers to one whose main business is buying and selling live pigs or in addition, operating a butchery or pork joint where both raw and cooked pork are sold.

Agrovet shop: A business run mostly by veterinary officers. Their main business is to sell livestock drugs, treat and vaccinate animals. They may or may not sell animal feeds and supplements.

Feed stockist: In this case, the main business is selling livestock feeds. In most cases, it involves milling of raw materials and feeds mixing. Some feed stockists may also deal in farm implements, feed supplements and cleaning materials.

Methodology: Tools, study area and sampling

The study focused on female- and male-led pig-related businesses within the More Pork II project districts. Participants were drawn from two intervention districts (Masaka and Mukono) and one control district (Mpigi). Using guides, FGDs, key informant interviews (KIIs) and individual interviews (IIs) were conducted to gather information on gender norms influencing pig-related businesses. The interviews were conducted with knowledgeable members of the community identified as directly involved in pig-related businesses, community leaders, cultural leaders, religious leaders, agricultural officers and the pig-related agripreneurs themselves. A total of 10 FGDs were conducted, and 39 key informants and 21 individuals interviewed (see Table 1).

Interview Type	Masaka		Mukono		Mpigi		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
FGD	1	3	1	2	1	2	10
Key informants	9	10	8	9	2	1	39
Individual interviews	4	4	4	4	3	2	21
Total	14	17	13	15	6	5	70

Preliminary findings

Nature of business

In the following sections, key issues are highlighted from the interviews conducted based on thematic areas pertaining to a pig-related business.

Key activities in the business

Although the informants listed activities in various pig-related businesses, this report presents activities associated with the specific business the key informants were involved in.

Pig farming

The main activities performed in pig farming include growing feeds, cleaning the pig pens, feeding pigs, giving water to the pigs, looking for a market, constructing the pens and dealing with pig buyers and input suppliers. All activities on the farm were performed by both men and women, except those that were regarded too heavy or hard for women, e.g., constructing the pen. However, rearing pigs is a taboo in the Muslim religion. Further, it was reported that in the past, women were not allowed to own or manage pigs because they were regarded as dirty animals. Although this is no longer a widely held belief by the community, some farmers are still reluctant to allow their young daughters to perform activities such as cleaning the pens claiming that the girls will be regarded as unclean, and this may lead to rejection by prospective male marriage partners.

Aggregator

Activities in pig aggregation overlapped with those in farming since some of the actors were also involved in pig rearing (production) activities. However, the main activities included searching for and transporting pigs, slaughtering, cutting, selling and roasting pork, as well as cleaning the premises. It is common knowledge that slaughtering pigs, cutting or roasting pork are taboos with regard to what women can do. If a woman performs these tasks, she will be considered unfit to be a wife because men believed that she could kill her husband given that she can slaughter a pig. By performing such an activity, the woman would embarrass her whole family and the community. One participant said that such a woman would be subject to name-calling with terms such as 'kyakula sajja' (the one who grew up like a man), 'nalukalala' (the one who does not fear anything) often used to refer to her, instead of her actual name.

In cases where a couple operates a pork joint, the husband does the cutting, roasting and selling of meat while the wife cooks and makes salads. This shows that even in a male-dominated activity if some needs are well aligned with expectations about gender roles, people will accept both men and women in their respective roles. In addition, in cases where women operate pork joints although people shun them and there is negative

talk about them, some people support their activities on the basis that the women are trying to earn a living and support their families.

Agrovet

Most of the agrovet businesses were operated by veterinary officers. The main activities comprise selling drugs and in some cases livestock feeds, keeping records, cleaning the premises, and conducting field visits to farms to offer artificial insemination (AI), vaccination, treatment and provision of technical advice. Whereas it was generally agreed that both men and women could perform all activities, some participants reported that it is taboo for a woman to perform AI or help a pig during difficult farrowing. Others said that it is not taboo, but the activities are too difficult for a woman to handle. It is also taboo for Muslim women to handle pigs.

Feed stockist

Most of the feed stockists purchase raw materials and mix feeds at their premises. Their main activities are purchasing raw materials, milling and mixing feed, looking for a market for the products, cleaning the store and keeping records. All the activities are performed by both men and women although cleaning the store and record-keeping were dominated by women. Activities requiring much strength such as operating machines, loading and unloading of goods are performed by men.

Location of business

Whereas most participants note that the location of the business is mainly determined by the customer base and capital available, women are expected to locate their businesses near their home where they can attend to the family as they operate the business and were, therefore, best suited as farmers. There were, however, some instances when a woman could locate a pig farm away from home. Reasons given: i) where a husband did not want his wife to deal with pigs (he could be a Muslim or a Seventh Day Adventist) in which case the woman could set up her business at a friend's farm or any other place away from home; ii) the woman wanted to operate the business secretly; iii) some Muslim and Adventist men are interested in the pig business but would prefer to keep it a secret, so they operate the business away from home under the guise that their wives owned the business.

It was generally reported that pork joints, agrovet and feed businesses should be located in urban centres where there is a market. However, women operating pork joints in urban centres may find themselves disparagingly referred to as she-men (omukazi atema embiizi alinga omusajja meaning, 'a woman who cuts pork is like a man'). Some women may admire her and regard her as hardworking, while others will claim she is bringing shame to women. Some men may admire and respect her for her hard work, while others might say that she is not fit to be a wife and claim that she will have relations with other men.

As far as men are concerned, most participants said that men can locate their business wherever they wish as long as they can earn income from it. A man who locates his business away from the expected location is considered as someone that is looking for better opportunities.

Products and services

Majority of the key informants did not cite any goods or services that were unexpected in any of the pig businesses. A few participants said that both men and women agrovet are not expected to sell unlicensed products or expired drugs. Such practices were monitored by the National Drug Authority (NDA), veterinary

officers and other traders and anyone found practising such, risked closure of their business or even imprisonment. If such a case is discovered, the first action would be for the authorities to give the person concerned a warning. The community may regard such a person as a murderer and shun his or her business.

One participant said that a woman found selling pig intestines, udder and the head would be regarded as an embarrassment to her spouse and friends. Otherwise, in pork joints, men often sell fresh or roasted pork while women sell salads, matooke, posho and cassava. A male aggregator from Masaka noted that:

'All customers buy from them because all those who eat roasted and fried pork also eat salads and other foods.'

Means of transport

Motorcycles were reported as the most important means of transport across all business types and districts. However, a big proportion of participants, both males and females, said it was taboo, particularly in the Buganda culture, for a woman to ride a motorcycle, carry a pig on it, or cycle on a bicycle. It was also regarded as unusual though not taboo, for a woman to drive a big truck. Such a woman would be regarded by the community and religious leaders as disrespectful. Both male and female participants said that women may be given names like 'nakawanga', which means a woman who behaves like a man and is unfit to be a wife. Whenever a woman was to take a pig to the market or purchase inputs, she had to hire a motorcycle and somebody else to carry the pig.

Walking to the market was considered disgraceful even for women. Men too, though regarded to be at liberty to use any means of transport, would be despised and lose respect if they operated their businesses on foot. Farmers would shun such male agripreneurs, and if he is a veterinary officer, they may lose confidence in his ability to handle emergency cases. The motorcycles thus play a key role in pig businesses in terms of transporting inputs and outputs. The perception that women should not ride them on their own may have cost implications on production since women have to hire them to transport inputs and animals, while men could easily ride by themselves and avoid the extra cost.

Labour use

According to a majority of participants, men and women were free to use any type of labour. However, it is unusual across all business types for people to employ or hire very old people, people living with disabilities, drunk or dirty people. It is also regarded inappropriate for male pork joint operators to employ young girls. At the farm level, women farmers prefer to employ men to handle the pigs, since it is believed that the activity is too difficult for women. Male farmers often use hired male labour if they have a farm. On the other hand, if they have 2–5 pigs at home the wife and children will provide most of the labour, while the man takes care of the feeds.

Agrovets and feed stockists preferred to employ males to carry out activities such as feed mixing, loading and unloading of materials, while pork joint operators preferred women to do the cooking and cleaning.

Sourcing supplies

Men often source supplies from pig farmers while women use middlemen and usually do not go out to source the pigs themselves. A male aggregator (KII) in Masaka added that:

'For inputs, I do it personally. Because I am a man, I can look for pigs using a motorcycle, slaughter by myself, cut it into pieces and then bring it to the pork joint.'

Norms with regard to women and men engaging in pig-related activities

Cross-cutting norms

Pig-related businesses are unique in the sense that piggery itself is still an emerging field of agriculture in Uganda. Traditionally it was not viewed in a positive light and so both men and women faced challenges as they began to embrace it. Indeed, until today, there still exist vast perceptions as well as limitations attributed to religious or traditionally-held beliefs concerning the trade.

Specifically, the male pig aggregator FGD from Kimaanya Kabonera highlighted what pig aggregators, whether male or female, had to face in the trade. These could be considered the first hurdle, in terms of norms, to participation in pig-related activities, whether for men or women.

- i. Pig aggregators were perceived as poor, always drunk and always near alcohol. This was because most people that worked in pork joints were perceived as failures. They were considered unwise and without business skills thus often wasted their money on alcohol. This was also because pork was often sold in bars where liquor and local brew were sold too.
- ii. The aggregators were often insulted as they moved with pigs to the places of slaughter. One participant said:

‘they would say, “there it is, the slaughterer of pigs.”’

Note in this case that the aggregator (the person) was referred to as ‘it’

- iii. It was the norm to hit a pig with an axe on the head during the slaughtering process and to remove the hairs off the skin; in some cases, it was often burnt.
- iv. Women could rear pigs but could not consume pork. Participants noted that:

‘Back in the day, women reared pigs but were not into the pig business. They could not eat pork at all because men were greedy.’

Notably, although the reason given here is greed, other reasons have been raised in different studies. Pork is often prepared and served outside the home. Mutambo et al. (2019) note that cultural norms viewed unaccompanied women who ate pork at retail outlets as irresponsible and demonstrating loneliness and prostitution. Furthermore, Roesel et al. (2019) note that pregnant women were also discouraged from eating pork as some believed that the child might have a mouth like that of a pig.

- v. Neither women nor men could transport pork or pigs by themselves on motorcycles. Participants noted that:

‘One would receive a lot of insults if they carried a pig on a motorcycle. We often get transporters to take the pigs to where we may want them.’

Participants in the male FGD in Kasawo Mukono also acknowledged that sometimes transportation of pigs is not easy such as when they use bicycles and motorcycles.

- vi. Some people believe in traditional deities (amongst the Baganda) and often their belief system would be at loggerheads with pig rearing. Thus, they cannot rear pigs or participate in pig-related activities.

- vii. Back in the day taking pigs for mating was a reserve of the despised men in society referred to as 'bisajasaja' – a term used to refer to a man without a worthy standing in the eyes of the community; one that is not worth much respect.

Overall, both men and women faced norm hurdles in joining pig-related businesses, but for women there were additional hurdles to overcome mainly with regard to gender norms particularly prohibitive to them. These were highlighted by FGD participants as discussed below.

Norms prohibitive to women's participation in pig-related businesses

Male FGD farmers in Mpigi highlighted the following as taboos and commonly held perceptions relating to women who engaged in pig-related businesses:

- i. It is not normal to see a woman castrating a piglet. This is not proper at all, as it might involve wrestling the animal to the ground; it is not acceptable for a woman to wrestle because they are perceived to be weak and lacking in skills to castrate a pig.
- ii. It is not proper for a woman to clean a pig's reproductive parts or take it for mating; this is shameful/awkward.
- iii. A woman should not slaughter a pig; she may lose prospects for marriage and could be famous for the 'wrong' reasons.
- iv. Back in the day, it was against prevailing norms for a woman to eat pork. However, today, it is common to see women eating pork.
- v. It is shameful to see a woman take a pig for mating (okujitwaala okuweka). It is a commonly held norm that women should be protected in just the same way as a child. They therefore cannot be asked to take a pig to mate since that would expose them to acts of intimacy which might expose them to temptation.

Male FGD farmers in Kasawo Mukono highlighted the following taboos and commonly held perceptions relating to women who engage in pig-related businesses:

- vi. A woman is perceived to be useful only in gardening, although some livestock could be brought for her at home to take care of.
- vii. A woman should stay home and prepare food for the man while he works at the butchery. Women should not spend time away from their home working in a butchery.
 - Some women are butchers, but they are very few. They are sometimes hired because of security reasons, since they are perceived as more trustworthy when it comes to handling money.
 - Notably, such a norm is sustained by perceptions such as the Tuyizere (2007) report which indicates that women are to be obedient and submissive to men and must seek permission from their husbands to work outside their domestic domain.
- viii. Women are fast when working in the business and tend to attract customers. For example, a beautiful lady tends to attract more male clients.
- ix. Again, a man cannot allow his wife to move so far away to go get pigs. It would mean that the home is left unattended and thus is not in good hands.

Male FGD farmers in Kityabule Mukono highlighted the following taboos and commonly held perceptions relating to women who engage in pig-related businesses:

- x. Naturally, women and men have different kinds of strengths. For when one spends a day at the stall cutting pork, they may not feel the fatigue immediately but after they get home, it may take a day before the feeling of fatigue becomes apparent.
- xi. Women should not participate in butcheries cutting pork or even fish. They note that: 'Even other tasks such as cutting big fish like the Nile Perch should not involve women because these can make women smelly yet they are workers at home; everywhere in the home would be smelling of fish.'

Female FGD farmers in Mpigi highlighted the following taboos and commonly held perceptions relating to women who engage in pig-related businesses:

- xii. It was taboo back then for women to work away from or outside the home. The participants asked, 'If you have a garden, children at home, and pigs to take care of, isn't that enough for her to do for the day, rather than standing at a butcher stall?'
- xiii. Cutting meat at a butcher stall (okutema) dishonours the image of the woman.

Female farmers participating in the FGD at Masaka highlighted the following taboos and commonly held perceptions relating to women who engage in pig-related businesses:

- xv. It is not good for a woman to build/construct shelters for the pigs. If she does so, she will be called a miser because the shelter is usually constructed by men, and she could have paid them to do so.

Male farmers who participated in the FGD at Masaka highlighted the following taboos and commonly held perceptions relating to women who engage in pig-related businesses:

- xvi. A woman can be flexible in working outside the home, but she must also ensure that the home is well cared for.

Overall, most of the activities which are considered taboo are associated with pig aggregation and notably restrictive to only women. The phrase 'men can do anything' was common across all types of businesses. The only instances where men, as well as women, faced restrictions was when one was a Muslim or Seventh Day Adventist, and also in the case of transportation of pigs. A general observation was that taboos have gradually relaxed over the last 15 to 20 years and more women are performing activities that were earlier considered taboo. There were certain activities (such as lifting heavy goods) which though not taboo were reported unsuitable for women because they were regarded as too difficult.

Consequences of deviating from the norms

As a result of the norms in place, there were several sanctions against those who did not comply:

- i. Name-calling: if a woman slaughters pigs, people will distance themselves from her and she will be referred to using derogatory names.
- ii. A male farmer from Mpigi area noted that the woman's children (and often the generations that follow her) will also be referred to by the same trade but using derogatory terms. For example, if she has a son, he will be called, 'kitabanyi kyo mukyaala asala embizzi', meaning the son of the woman who slaughters pigs.
- iii. The woman's marriage prospects will be low since men would avoid her.
- iv. If the woman is married, her husband loses respect in the community.
- v. Sometimes her marriage may fail if her husband does not support her for deviating from the norm.

- vi. She may be looked down upon and in such cases, clients may take goods on credit and will not be willing to pay cash when they come to her stall.

Compliance to norms: Gatekeepers

- i. The husbands

From the male participants' FGD in Kityabule, one said:

'It is not good for a woman to ride the husband's motorcycle or bicycle; it's impossible in my home.'

- ii. Potential clients, especially the male

Another male participant gave an example of when he went to the dentist for tooth extraction, only to find out that the dentist was a female.

'With all the pain, I asked to leave because morally I know that a woman is not supposed to stand so close or touch ('okwebamba') a man in any way. I left and looked for a male dentist'.

The same applies to a *boda boda* rider who is a woman.

'There is no way I can sit on it, sitting postures are always different for both the passenger and rider'.

- iii. The men who approach a woman for a love relationship will see it unfit for her to engage in the pork cutting/pig slaughtering business. It is important to note that these are not necessarily proposals for love relationships that ultimately result in marriage.
- iv. The traditional/cultural leaders are seen as best positioned to talk to the woman and explain what is expected of her. These leaders (senga/kojja) seem to be in a better place in terms of authority and are well-respected in the communities.
- v. Religious leaders are held in high regard, and it is believed that they can give her spiritual insight on why she should adhere to the cultural norms as well as counsel her.
- vi. The woman's children, especially those that are adolescents who are being called names and are more self-aware and keen to fit in with their peers, are likely to try to dissuade their mother and ask her to comply with the norms.

It is important to note that these same children can however, be trained by the woman if she is engaging them in the business. This forms a support base. In addition, the woman in the male-dominated field may employ her children to work with her but still employ them in traditionally-accepted gender roles. One participant noted:

'I would give an example of one that I saw in Nsangi. She was a single mother, running her butchery and pork business together with two of her children. So, in her absence, the son would attend to the butchery stall while the daughter handles the kitchen tasks of cooking/frying. That is how she has managed to provide for her children.'

When deviance from norms may be overlooked

The restrictive norms notwithstanding, there are instances when the norms are less restrictive. For example:

- i. A woman who is not married and has to eke a living by herself. It was noted that she can do as she likes. Such women often did what they felt like, and indeed some were able to earn a living even from activities that are frowned upon such as selling in a pork butchery.
- ii. Very young girls may not be frowned upon if they take on tasks traditionally held by men. One participant noted:

'I have seen a very young girl cutting meat at a stall in town. She is even jovial while doing it and asked me how many kilos I wanted with a smile. I think it has no negative effect on her. She has been accepted in this situation (kwekaza). Surprisingly, her meat gets done so fast because after making the cuts, she rushes to the kitchen to prepare food for those who prefer cooked meat as well as beer/ alcohol in the sitting area. She does entertain her clients and many men flock to the business premises.'

If the woman is a widow she is allowed to participate in the pork business.

Changes in perceptions

Most participants reported that there had been changes in perceptions in the pig enterprises over the past 15 to 20 years. Noticeable changes include:

- Pig farming has grown in popularity and become a viable business. In the early days, pigs were considered dirty animals, an enterprise for the poorest members of the community and a taboo to Muslims and Seventh Day Adventists. Even among non-Muslims, it was taboo for women to handle pigs or eat pork. The perception that pigs are dirty animals has changed and many households have adopted pig farming. In addition, women are more involved in the activities of running pig farms.
- Pig farmers have adopted improved methods of pig keeping, specifically improved breeds and breeding, feeds and feeding, housing and disease control. In the past years, pigs were left to roam freely and scavenge on anything they could ingest. This has changed and they are now sheltered, fed on high quality feeds and protected from disease and parasitic infestation.
- More women are now involved in pig-related businesses along the value chain. In addition to more female pig farmers, women are now involved in pig aggregation, agrovets and feed businesses. The increase in the number of women veterinarians was regarded as notable since in the past, particularly in the Buganda culture, women handling livestock was regarded as a taboo. It was noted that some women are now operating pork butcheries, cutting and roasting pork, an activity which in the past was unheard of, and the numbers keep growing.

The factors driving these changes were highlighted as:

- Entry of organizations that are creating awareness amongst smallholder farmers on the potential of pig production as a source of livelihood. Together with the government, these organizations have trained farmers on improved pig husbandry, supplied breeding stock and improved market structures.
- Women empowerment programs which have enlightened girls and women on their academic and economic potential. This has encouraged more girls to take up science subjects and pursue careers that were formerly regarded as a preserve for males. The phrase 'women can do anything men do' is now common across all business types. It was also noted that the government has made strides in promoting gender equality.
- Lack of white-collar jobs had resulted in highly educated people going into self-employment, with some launching pig-related businesses. The entry of skilled people into the pig business has created a conducive environment for dissemination and uptake of new technologies, leading to overall growth of the value chain.

Organizations that promote women's engagement in pig-related businesses

Several organizations were cited as having played a role in encouraging women in the pig business. They included the church and religious organizations (Parish Model of Emyoga, Caritas Mado), Child Link (local NGO), ILRI and the government through the National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAADS). All these had focused on production. The organizations offered piglets to women groups and trained them on pig management. Notably, slightly more than half of the participants were not aware of these organizations although they were mentioned in Mukono and Masaka districts.

It is worth noting that all the organizations had targeted their interventions at the production node of the pig value chain. There is need for interventions that encourage women participation in post-production activities such as pig marketing and consumption.

Empowerment

Definition

Narayan (2002) describes empowerment as the expansion of assets and capabilities of (poor) people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. Empowerment is also an individually located concept (Alkire et al., 2013) and often indicators used in its measurement are self-reported. It is thus important to be aware of how individuals understand this concept. Below, we explore aspects of empowerment – the definition that portrays what participants understand when empowerment is mentioned and the constraints and enabling factors to empowerment, particularly for those in pig-related businesses.

One participant from the Mpigi women farmers FGD started off the discussion by noting that:

'In my understanding, it is like when you get to hear that President Museveni gave women a voice by bringing them to the forefront of things (yaja abakyala emanju), that is, female emancipation, in that they are now able to compete in the male domain and also campaign for political offices. For example, we now hear that the Vice President is a female, and that we have female Resident District Commissioners (RDCs). So today, women have been brought to the forefront of development.'

'Yaja abakyala emanju' literally means to bring from the background to the forefront.

One participant noted that empowerment relates to building upon something, being in a position to uplift one from a lower to a higher level. While another added the local phrase, 'Okuzamu amanyi', which refers to strengthening someone in all circumstances and helping them to move upwards by lifting them.

One individual used the phrase, 'Kwekutuzamu amanyi nga abakyala'. She added that it is to uplift women and illustrated the process through an example:

'Long ago, our mothers were women who were supposed to stay at home, look after the house, cook and bear children. So, when some of us got married, we were expected to stay at home, cook, give birth to children, dress in a 'gomesi' (traditional attire of the Baganda), and never leave home without our husband's permission even if we were required to go to the shops or market. But when we were empowered, we gained confidence and it improved our self-esteem. We could now engage in different income-generating activities or work.'

Yet another participant defined empowerment through this statement:

'I liken empowerment to a case in point where, for example, I receive support to build my capacity to work in the office as a councillor where it gives me authority and power to do my job well. It also enables me to see that I rise from the level of a councillor to higher-level office.'

Male pig farmers from Masaka also defined empowerment as giving someone power/authority (obuyinza) and giving power to somebody who does not have it, in order to build capacity in an individual to achieve what is expected of them. The word came into use because there were people who were disadvantaged and did not have the authority to own assets or to make some decisions. In the female farmer FGD held in Lunguvu Mukono, their understanding of empowerment was through the lens of one being self-reliant and independent. Participants thus defined empowerment as involving changing the position of, as well as the giving of power to an individual.

Characteristics of an empowered male/female pig aggregator (vet drug/feed stockist)

Participants in the FGDs defined empowerment with a focus on power, and in some cases, incorporated this with location along the hierarchy of power. In the discussion that follows, we explore characteristics indicating what empowerment looks like and what disempowerment looks like from the participants' understanding of the concept.

Women farmers in the Mpigi FGD describe an empowered male in pig-related business as one with the ability to set up a profitable pig farm to improve his (and his family's) status in life, one who attends training sessions and puts the information gained into use so that his business is profitable, one who can uplift and support his wife, practices the best farming methods of housing, breeding and feeding the animals. Male farmers participating in the Masaka FGD, also highlight that an empowered male agriprenneur is someone who can make decisions to improve their standard of living and at the same time seek new modes of pig farming.

An empowered woman pays attention and is open to learning new methods of engaging in pig farming, moves with the current trends, is able to take care of the animals and ensures that she also engages her children so that everyone in the family is able to actively participate and appreciate the practice of pig farming. She is also a woman who shows concern, love and pays attention to her pig farm – as described by women farmers in the Mpigi FGD. Male farmers participating in the FGD describe an empowered female agriprenneur as one who boldly performs pig farming as a good business venture, has the ability to seek extra services, can make decisions on, for instance, hiring of labour, purchasing of pigs and the means of transport to use. Male aggregators FGD participants noted that an empowered female is someone who does not fear how others will see her as she operates/manages the pork butchery. Female farmers in the Masaka FGD said that an empowered female aggregator is one who relates well with others within the family, community and also with fellow workmates.

The empowered male, on the other hand, is described as one who looks after his family well, especially his children's education and also has assets.

The disempowered female and male agriprenneur

Mpigi women FGD farmers describe the disempowered female agriprenneur as one who works on her own without any support or knowledge, and whatever she does is not successful. The male FGD participants also suggested that a disempowered female is fearful, not confident enough to attend formal training, and may not want to change her way of thinking which could have arisen from new knowledge. The female farmers' FGD from Masaka noted that a disempowered woman experiences domestic violence in her home, does nothing productive to sustain the family, is neither creative nor innovative, and has an unsupportive husband. The female farmers' FGD from Kimanya in Masaka described the disempowered female aggregator as one who does not work, but spends her time gossiping. Participants in this last group related laziness to being disempowered as well.

The disempowered male agriprenuer, on the other hand, is unable to gain ideas on something that he doesn't know, does not have time to look after the pigs and does not use veterinary services. He, generally, lacks information and this limits change in practices because often such a man does not want to be confronted so that he can change. In addition, the disempowered male was described as rigid, does not appreciate new knowledge, cannot make decisions and has no authority.

Factors that enhance or constrain male and female empowerment

Factors that enhance empowerment

The female farmers' FGD participants noted that training by NGOs and the formation of women groups enhances both men and women's empowerment in pig aggregation. Mpigi women FGD farmers suggested that training enhances empowerment, while male farmers in the Masaka FGDs noted the importance of education for women. Participants in the male aggregators FGD in Mpigi indicated that farmer groups are helpful because one can borrow from them. However, they cautioned that groups could have a downside when one fails to repay loans and loses everything in the process of loan recovery.

Factors that constrain empowerment

With regard to factors that constrain empowerment, male farmers from the Masaka FGD argued that limited productive resources such as land and space could hinder one's empowerment. Mpigi women FGD farmers cited limited financial resources, unsupportive male partners and the inability to attend training as factors that constrain women's empowerment. According to Mpigi female FGD participants, factors that constrain male empowerment include lack of training and information sharing, low levels of education and high levels of poverty.

Female farmers from Lunguvu in Mukono noted that lack of income (money) and support from husbands constrain women's empowerment, while for men, the failure to accept that they do not know is a key factor. They further argued that domestic violence which breaks homes and lack of education are constraining factors to empowerment for both men and women. In addition, male FGD participants from Mpigi noted that for both men and women, limited capital, lack of enough time, lack of land and ignorance all constrain empowerment.

Conclusion

Pig-related enterprises in Uganda have evolved and picked up pace from being a despised trade to one that is supporting livelihoods as acknowledged both by participants within this study and in previous related studies cited within the text. Nonetheless, restrictive social and gender norms towards the sub-sector are still strong. Most norms are prohibitive towards women and thus curtail their participation in pig-related businesses. These norms are likely to dampen the adoption of innovations geared towards making pig-related businesses more productive, inclusive and supportive of livelihoods. Since norms are part of informal institutions, it is imperative that they are taken into consideration in the design, implementation and evaluation of interventions to attain more inclusive pig-related value chains.

Additionally, while empowerment has become a buzzword, project partners and beneficiaries may perceive it in different ways. In the context of the study, some define empowerment with respect to power relations, others perceive it as capacity, others yet, through the lens of autonomy, amongst several different ways of defining it. Norms as informal institutions are consequential for empowerment. Social and gender norms determine whether a woman can work, what kind of work she can do, where she can work and with whom, as well as what other responsibilities she has aside from paid work. Norms may thus need exploration before any engagement of value chain actors to ensure that the interventions are well suited given existing norms.

Furthermore, since empowerment is an individually located concept and its measurement often involves some form of self-reporting, there is need to explore how it is understood by the assessed subjects. The local² definition of empowerment and factors that enhance or diminish it, can provide insights into the design and implementation of gender-transformative approaches which could result in further empowerment of women and communities as a whole.

Way forward

Since the results hereby presented are from preliminary analysis, further analysis of data to facilitate publication of two journal articles and a policy brief will be done in 2022.

Findings from the study can inform interventions under the proposed Sustainable Animal Productivity for Livelihoods, Nutrition, and Gender Inclusion (SAPLING) project. This initiative aims to enable livestock producers, especially women and youth to engage in inclusive value chains and achieve sustainable productivity gains resulting in improved livelihoods. Uganda is one of the countries identified within which the initiative will be implemented.

² Relating to a particular region or part

Areas for further research

There is need to explore the reasons for the persistence of some norms and why others have changed in cases where they have indeed changed. This will provide insights into the state of gender norms as informal institutions governing how individuals relate, and possible ways that interventions could be designed to trigger changes in norms that are prohibitive towards certain groups such as women.

Further research is needed to take stock of what gender norms were in the past, are in the present, and will or could be in the future. This can provide a form of predictability given expectations within the community. With this anticipation, initiatives can be designed to take into account such expectations in order to implement more inclusive programs.

There is also need for further investigation into each category of gatekeepers to understand the reasons behind their stance, particularly understanding the perspective of older women and other women who are norm enforcers. This will provide insights into how women evolve as they negotiate with norms as informal institutions which can propagate oppression. In other words, 'how do they move from being oppressed to accepting these norms and finally enforcing the norms on others?'

Key challenges faced during the survey

- i. The aggregators in all the three districts seemed very busy, and enumerators had to wait for them in order to collect the data. The aggregators and veterinary drug stockists declined to participate in the FGDs in all target districts. This was reported to the PI and a decision was made to interview them as key informants in all the districts. This increased the duration of data collection by three days.
- ii. It was difficult to meet the District Community Development Officer (DCDO) in Masaka because of the new city status structure. The interview was conducted after a meeting with the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) who gave the DCDO a go-ahead to participate in the meeting. There is need for ILRI's administration to reach out to the new city administration in order to avoid such challenges in future.
- iii. The interviews with feed and drug stockists were mostly conducted with the employees of these enterprises given that such agripreneurs are usually very busy and could not be easily reached. The employees could not give as much information as would have been collected from the owners of the businesses.
- iv. Long distances amongst study participants because veterinary officers tend to work with a specific category of people within their area of operation and do not seem to liaise with other veterinary officers. In mobilizing participants to the discussions, these are the people they usually reach out to and so, some come from further locations than others, and thus the team had to wait for them to arrive.
- v. Complaints with regard to the length of the study tools. Although participants complained about the length of the tools, it was observed that during the discussions they tended to drift from the main topic and discussed their interactive learning sessions as they had never met together to share ideas apart from the time they spent listening to the trainers.

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