

Review of: "Factors Influencing Smallholder Farmers' Preference for Veterinary Services Providers in Zimbabwe"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This is a good piece of research that has taken into account the views of farmers, practitioners and key informants. The study conducted a comprehensive investigation into the ways in which veterinary services are provided to the smallholder sector in two districts, using a mixed-methods approach. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods. However, the following comments and revisions may improve the paper and bring additional value to readers.

Minor comments

- Author citations in the text should be in a single format to be selected and edited.
- It would be beneficial to provide more details about the semi-structured questionnaire, such as the specific questions or topics covered. This would help readers understand the quantitative aspect of the data collection process
- Give full details of data collection, including the software used for statistical analysis (SPSS, R...).
- To strengthen the discussion, it would be beneficial to provide some evidence or references to support the recommendations made. This could include citing studies or reports that highlight the effectiveness of integrating CAHWs into the government veterinary system or examples of successful public-private partnerships in veterinary drug supply.

Major comments

- The study would benefit from a clearer justification of why a mixed-methods approach was chosen over using a single method. What unique insights and advantages did this approach offer in the context of investigating veterinary service provision to the smallholder sector? Expanding on this rationale would strengthen the research design.
- It would be more accurate to include tables describing the variables used in the statistical analysis (Descriptive analysis). In order to strengthen the collection of qualitative data, it would be useful to describe the method used to saturate the data. How did Authors determine that they had gathered enough information from the focus groups and interviews to ensure a complete analysis?
- To improve readers' understanding of the results, it would be a useful idea to provide figures for the statistical analysis in each section
- In addition to the semi-structured questionnaire, providing information about the survey's reliability and validity measures would enhance the rigor of the quantitative data collection process
- The discussion could benefit from providing more detailed insights into the specific challenges and transaction costs

faced by smallholder farmers in accessing veterinary services. Exploring the specific barriers or limitations they encounter would enhance the understanding of the complexities involved in the decision-making process.

- When mentioning the need to standardize the training curriculum for CAHWs, it would be helpful to briefly explain the rationale behind this recommendation. Providing insights into the potential benefits of a standardized curriculum, such as ensuring consistent knowledge and skills among CAHWs, would strengthen the justification for this proposal.

By addressing these major and minor revisions, this article is suitable for publication and it will be enhanced, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the complex factors influencing farmer's decision in selecting veterinary service providers.