



Peer Review Report Form

Manuscript Title:	Leading from the Margins: Lived Experiences of Female Presidents in Farmers' Associations
Type of Article:	Original Article

FIRST ROUND

Editor

General Comments and Recommendations

The reviewers appreciate the strengths of your manuscript and recommend revisions to enhance its clarity, organization, and overall quality. In addition, you are required to conduct a thorough inventory of the references in your manuscript. Please ensure that only the sources cited within the text are included in the References section, and likewise, that all references listed in the References section are properly cited in the manuscript. For example, if you have 20 cited references in the manuscript, then only 20 references should be included in the References section. However, please note that repeated citations of the same source within the text are counted as a single entry in the References list; therefore, the total number of entries in the References section may be lower than the total number of in-text citations.

Reviewer 1

General Comments and Recommendations

This manuscript addresses an important and underexplored topic, especially in the local agricultural setting, and the paper has practical value because it gives voice to women leaders in farmers' associations. The study also has a clear social relevance. However, the main concern of the paper is the weakness in its qualitative rigor and depth of analysis. At present, the results and discussion look too neat, too uniform, and sometimes more like generalized statements than lived experiences. Because of this, the paper's contribution is reduced. The manuscript can be improved much if the authors strengthen the methodological transparency, deepen the analysis, and show more clearly how the themes were really derived from the participants' accounts.

Specific Comments and Recommendations

First, the paper claims to be a qualitative case study on lived experiences, but the presentation of findings is too compressed and overly standardized. Many quotations are very short, similar in structure, and almost all participants appear to say parallel ideas in a very polished way. This makes the reader question whether the findings fully capture the complexity of actual lived experiences. The authors may strengthen this by presenting richer and more differentiated narratives, not only short confirming quotes. Second, the methodology still needs stronger qualitative justification. The paper mentions purposive sampling, thematic analysis, trustworthiness, and ethics, but these are presented in a generic way. It is still unclear how



interviews were developed, how long they lasted, how saturation or adequacy of data was considered, how coding was done, and how themes were reviewed and finalized. In qualitative work, these are very important for credibility. Third, the discussion is too affirming and mostly literature-matching. It explains that the findings are consistent with previous studies, but it does not yet show enough deeper interpretation of what is unique in this specific context of Imelda, Zamboanga Sibugay. The paper will be stronger if the authors move beyond confirming existing literature and explain what new contextual insight this study adds. Lastly, there is also a noticeable issue in alignment. The title says “lived experiences” of a female president, but the study actually involved ten female presidents, and the results are organized into broad categories of experiences, practices, challenges, and coping. Because of this, the framing, design, and reporting should be made more conceptually consistent. The authors may clarify whether the study is mainly about lived experiences, leadership practices, or multiple dimensions of women’s leadership, so the whole manuscript will have tighter focus and stronger scholarly contribution.

Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accept the manuscript for publication.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers’ comments and recommendations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

Reviewer 2

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. The paper tackles an interesting and highly relevant topic regarding the lived experiences and challenges of women leaders in farmers’ associations in Zamboanga Sibugay. The qualitative approach is appropriate for understanding their daily realities.

<u>Specific Comments and Recommendations</u>
Your title explicitly states a Female President (singular), which implies a single-subject case study. However, the Abstract and Methodology indicate that the study actually involved ten female presidents. You need to revise the title to accurately reflect the scope and sample of your research.
In your Methodology, you stated you interviewed ten presidents. But in your Results section, for almost every single theme, you only provided quotes from P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P8, P9, and P10 . What happened to P4 and P5? Why are they completely missing from the data? Furthermore, presenting exactly one quote per participant for every theme feels highly unnatural for qualitative research. Human interviews do not yield perfectly symmetrical responses like this. It makes the data look cherry-picked or artificially organized. You need to present the findings more organically and account for all your participants.



There is a noticeable overlap in your thematic analysis. For instance, Theme 2 under Lived Experiences is "Emotional and Social Experiences" , which discusses emotional burden and stress. Then, under Challenges, Theme 3 is "Work-Life Balance and Emotional Burden" , which discusses the exact same emotional strain. I highly suggest re-evaluating and merging your themes to provide a deeper, more cohesive analysis rather than just repeating the same concepts in different sections.

You mentioned at the very end of the Methodology that "ChatGPT was used to refine the language and organize the content". While the use of AI for language editing is generally acceptable nowadays, this does not belong in the Methodology section because it is not a research method. Please move this to a separate "Declaration of Generative AI Use" section or place it in the Acknowledgments, depending on the specific formatting guidelines of the journal.

Please review your references carefully. I noticed that the citation for Ragasa et al. (2022) is listed twice. One has the title "Limitations of contract farming as a propoor strategy: Evidence from smallholder farmers" and the other is "Limitations of contract farming as a pro-poor strategy: The case of maize outgrower schemes in Ghana" , but both have the exact same journal volume and page numbers (World Development, 102, 30–56). This kind of referencing error affects the credibility of your literature review and needs to be cleaned up.

Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accept the manuscript for publication.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

SECOND ROUND

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Editor</u>	<u>Reviewer 1</u>	<u>Reviewer 2</u>
Accept the manuscript for publication.	/	/	/
Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.			
Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.			