

**Household Socio-Economic Characteristics and Their Effect on Livelihood Strategy  
Preferences in Shawbury, Qumbu**

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**ABSTRACT**

At the centre of rural development are household livelihood strategies. The livelihoods of South Africa's rural African poor have long been characterized by diverse activities and intertwined with urban opportunities. This paper identifies the role of household socio-economic characteristics on household preferences of livelihood strategies and also identifies household livelihood strategy preferences in Shawbury, Qumbu. A random sampling technique was used to select 100 households in Shawbury. Descriptive analysis techniques were used to describe the characteristics of the households and livelihood strategies and to identify the relationships between household characteristics and livelihood strategy preferences, a multinomial logit regression model was used. The livelihood strategies used for the multinomial logit regression were production for the market; production for consumption; non-farm employment; social grants and remittances. For much of the research available for livelihood strategies, tools such as the sustainable livelihoods framework have been the focus for studying the determinants of livelihood strategies; however these tools have little to no consideration for the aspirations and preferences of the individuals in question. This study highlights some possible tools that could be used to examine the influence of aspirations and preferences on changing livelihood strategies including the consumer choice framework, the domestic development cycle, the social network framework for decision making, the social systems approach and conjoint analysis. For this study, the actual preferences of livelihood strategies among the households are presented using conjoint analysis. The multinomial logit regression model has helped to identify some of the factors that influence the preference of certain livelihood strategies by households namely, gender of the household head, age of the household head, size of the land owned, and educational level of the household head, household size, and livestock value. This analysis presents evidence about the relationship between household characteristics contributing to the adoption of

certain livelihood strategies by people of Shawbury. The conjoint analysis has helped to identify that the most preferred to the least preferred livelihood activities are non-farm labour activities, crop production, animal production, contact with family/leisure and other natural resource based activities respectively.

Key words: Livelihood strategies, Preferences, Shawbury, Multinomial logit regression, Conjoint Analysis