

EVALUATION OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION BY SMALL HOLDER BANANA FARMERS IN GATANGA DISTRICT, KENYA

Degree Programme: [MASTER OF SCIENCE IN AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT](#) [1]

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Abstract

The general objective of this study was to analyze the factors which influence the farmers' access and Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and how the ICT affects adoption of improved farming technologies in banana production in Gatanga District of Kenya. The ICT in this study was defined to include technologies and media that capture, store and disseminate data and information and tools such as video, television, digital camera, radio, mobile telephone, computer-mediated networks and print media among others.

A multi-stage purposive sampling and proportionate allocation technique was used in the study to select n=120 respondents. Three main banana growing locations were purposively selected across 3 Divisions. Three banana groups from each location were randomly selected from a list of 20 groups obtained from the District Agricultural Office. Systematic simple random sampling technique was then used to select half of the members from each group at interval of two. A fifty percent Sample size was drawn to minimize cost and time. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) argue that a 50% sample is large enough and can be used to represent the target population if such population is large enough to justify sampling. A pre-tested questionnaire was used to obtain primary data from the respondents. Four questionnaires were discarded because they were incomplete, a total of 116 questionnaires were usable. Data entry was done by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) data builder. Descriptive analysis was done by Excel and SPSS while quantitative analysis by STATA computer software.

Radio, mobile phone and television were the most accessible ICT among smallholder banana farmers. The least accessible were internet, computer and video cassette. Gender, education and income levels were found to influence use of ICT in obtaining information on banana production. Affordability, physical access and prerequisite skills to use internet and computer related services were a problem to majority of farmers. The study findings indicate that access to ICT influence adoption of Tissue Culture banana biotechnology. Use of ICT as a source of agricultural information improves banana productivity and market efficient resulting into increased farm income for smallholder farmers.

To enhance use of ICT in extension the study recommends capacity building of extension staff and researchers, reduction of taxes on radio-wave licensing to encourage more FM radio stations and improve accessibility to ICT services by investing in both complementary infrastructure and higher education. Further research should be conducted to find out technology-specific attributes and socio-economic factors that impede actors in agriculture sector to effectively use ICTs to full potential.

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