



Mobile Phone Usage for Agricultural Information Dissemination in Southern Malawi: Adoption Rates and Performance Outcomes

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Abstract

Mobile phone usage has become a significant tool for information dissemination in various sectors, including agriculture. In Malawi, where agricultural productivity is crucial for national development, mobile phones are increasingly being used to share agricultural information with farmers. Qualitative research methods were employed, involving semi-structured interviews with a sample of 50 farmers from different regions of Southern Malawi. Data collection was conducted through face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions to gather detailed insights into farmer perspectives on mobile phone usage for agricultural information dissemination. Findings indicate that approximately 60% of the sampled farmers have adopted mobile phone-based services, with younger farmers showing higher adoption rates compared to older ones. The most common themes identified were improved access to market information and enhanced decision-making capabilities among users. The study concludes that while there is significant potential for mobile phone usage in agricultural information dissemination, the effectiveness of these platforms remains variable and depends on various factors such as farmer education levels and service provider quality. Further research is recommended to optimise these services. Given the promising findings, it is recommended that policy makers support initiatives aimed at increasing access to and improving the quality of mobile phone-based agricultural information dissemination services in Southern Malawi. Mobile Phone Usage, Agricultural Information Dissemination, Farmers Adoption Rates, Performance Outcomes

Keywords: *African Geography, Qualitative Research, Mobile Phones, Information Dissemination, Agricultural Development, Participatory Action Research, Community Engagement*

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