



E-Learning Platforms in Agricultural Extension Services: Adoption and Outcomes in Western Ethiopian Highlands

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Abstract

E-learning platforms have emerged as a promising tool for agricultural extension services in rural areas, particularly in regions with limited access to traditional face-to-face training. Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions with farmers, agricultural extension agents, and technology providers. A total of 30 in-depth interviews and 5 focus groups were conducted over a period of six months. Farmers showed high initial interest in e-learning platforms but faced significant challenges such as internet connectivity issues and digital literacy gaps. Among the farmers using these platforms, there was an observed increase in knowledge about new agricultural practices by 40% compared to those not using them. The study reveals that while e-learning platforms have the potential to enhance agricultural extension services in Western Ethiopia, they require tailored solutions addressing technical and socio-economic challenges. Policy makers should invest in infrastructure improvements for better internet connectivity and implement training programmes to improve digital literacy among farmers. Agricultural extension agencies must also collaborate with technology providers to ensure seamless integration of e-learning platforms into existing service delivery systems.

Keywords: *Ethiopia, Highlands, Participatory Action Research, Community-Based Development, Extension Services, Digital Divide, Technological Adoption*

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