

METHOD APPROACH TO SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS AS AN ANALYTIC TOOL FOR AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION SHARING AMONG FARMERS IN WESTERN KENYA

Abstract.

Flow of information among farmers is a complex process due to the nature of the unseen interconnected path of communication and actors involved in generation, packaging and dissemination. This complex process hinders adoption of innovations among farmers. To better understand the process of flow and sharing of information, a study was conducted using a Social Network Analysis (SNA) tool to map, measure and analyze social relationships among farmers and their networks that can be utilized in dissemination of agricultural information. Using data from Elwanikha and Ekisumo villages in Western Kenya, the study describes how Social Network Analysis (SNA) can be used as a methodology to map, measure and analyze social relationships and their application to dissemination of agricultural information. The survey data were analyzed using UCINET VI (version 6.624) and Net-draw (version 2.160) software to generate maps and compute relevant network metrics. The results show clear distinctions between villages and for all the SNA measures. SNA offers a valuable approach to information sharing among farmers, extension service providers and researchers to identify opinion leaders, influencers, clusters in the network, and those individuals serving as connectors in the network. SNA can be useful for quantitative analysis of interaction patterns that can facilitate information sharing among farmers. Keywords: social network analysis; opinion leaders; influencers; network metrics

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