

Factors Influencing the Use of Mobile Phone by Smallholder Farmers in Vegetable Marketing in Fogera District

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Abstract : This study was intended to identify the factors influencing the use of mobile phones in vegetable marketing in Fogera district. The use of mobile phones in vegetable marketing and factors influencing mobile phone use were specific objectives of the study. Three kebeles from the Fogera district were selected purposively based on their vegetable production potential. A simple random sampling technique (lottery method) was used to select 153 vegetable producer farmers. Interview schedule and key informants interviews were used to collect primary data. For analyzing the data, descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage, two independent t-tests, and chi-square were used. Furthermore, econometric analysis (binary logistic model) was used to assess the factors influencing mobile phone use for vegetable market information. Contingency coefficient and variance inflation factor were used to check multicollinearity problems between the independent variables. Of 153 respondents, 82 (61.72%) were mobile phone users, while 71 (38.28 %) were mobile phone nonusers. Moreover, the main use of mobile phones in vegetable marketing includes communicating at a distance to save time and minimizing transport costs, getting vegetable marketing price information, identifying markets and buyers to sell the vegetable, deciding when to sell the vegetable, negotiating with buyers for better vegetable prices and for searching of the fast market to avoid from losing of product through perishing. The model result indicated that the level of education, size of land, income, access to credit, and age were significant variables affecting the use of mobile phones in vegetable marketing. It could be recommended to encourage adult education or give training for farmers on how to operate mobile phones and create awareness for the elderly rural farmers as they are able to use the mobile phone for their vegetable marketing. Moreover, farmers should be aware that mobile phones are very important for those who own very small land to get maximum returns from their production. Lastly, providing access to credit and improving and diversifying income sources for the farmers to have mobile phones were recommended to improve the livelihood of farmers.

Keywords : mobile phone, farmers, vegetable marketing, Fogera District

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