

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the perceptions of farmers towards a student-farmer centered extension arrangement called the Farm Attachment Programme (FAP). Despite the pertinence of Agriculture to the economy, its potential has not been realized. To address this shortfall, research and training institutions have designed and generated knowledge and technologies. However, the innovations generated have hardly reached the end users. In response, Egerton University established Farm Attachment Programme (FAP) to innovatively engage small-scale farmers in 2014. As a result, the study sought to determine the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOTs) of the farm attachment program. A census survey of 100 farmers that had been engaged in FAP in Nakuru and Baringo Counties in Kenya was conducted using semi - structured questionnaires. The study employed a Confirmatory Factor Analysis(CFA) model to examine how the farmers felt about the programme in terms of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. From the SWOT analysis, higher factor loadings of 0.763 on Factor 2 indicated that increased technology awareness and access among farmers was the main strength of FAP while 0.686 on Factor 1 indicated that increase in farmer linkage was the main opportunity. On the other hand, loadings of 0.830 and 0.760 on factor 3 and 4 indicated that short attachment duration and high costs of student accommodation were the main weakness and threat of FAP respectively. The study recommends for a review of the attachment duration to at least twelve or more weeks to ensure successful implementation of the interventions introduced by the students. Based on the strengths and opportunities presented by the FAP, the study further recommends that the programme should be expanded to other counties.

Keywords: Farm attachment programme: Agricultural productivity: SWOT analysis: Confirmatory Factor Analysis.