

INFORMATION NEED AND INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR AMONG YOUTH FARMERS IN KYERWA DISTRICT, TANZANIA.

ABSTRACT

This study assessed the information needs and information-seeking behavior of youth farmers engaged in various agricultural activities in Kyerwa District, Tanzania. Employing a mixed-methods research approach, data were collected through structured questionnaires and interviews, achieving a reliability coefficient of 0.89. A cross-sectional design was utilized, targeting a sample of 104 youth farmers alongside key informants, including village and ward executive officers and agricultural extension staff. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants from four randomly chosen villages across two wards. Data collection methods included self-administered questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGDs), interview schedules, and observation checklists. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively, while qualitative data were examined thematically. The findings indicated that youth farmers require specific information tailored to their daily agricultural practices, including topics such as animal husbandry, crop management, quality seed selection, planting techniques, climatic conditions, and value addition. The study also revealed notable information-seeking behaviors, including the importance of comparing information from multiple sources, selecting credible sources, and seeking assistance from intermediaries. Additionally, youth farmers expressed a strong interest in engaging in agricultural activities, highlighting the crucial role of accessible agricultural information in fostering this interest. Based on the findings, the study recommends leveraging social media as a valuable source of agricultural information, emphasizing the need for youth farmers to be guided in identifying high-quality information sources. This approach aligns with the ongoing advancements in information and communication technology (ICT) and has the potential to enhance the productivity and engagement of youth in agriculture.

Keywords: Youth farmers, Agricultural information, Information need, seeking behavior
And Social media

1 INTRODUCTION

Globally youths as defined by the United Nations (UN) are over one billion, and they make up 85% of the population in developing nations (Nyakiema, 2021). Over 70% live in rural areas and are in extreme poverty and unemployed despite the potentials in the agriculture sector. The primary industry where the majority of the country's unemployed young people can find work is agriculture, but for youth few are currently drawn to it (Mueller, 2017). On the other hand, youth represent a potential group for the transformation of rural livelihood through the agriculture sector and build a more resilient food system. This is critical for coping with the expanding population's demand for food and amidst climate challenges (Lindsjö et al., 2021). This is because youth are energetic, innovative, and receptive to innovations thus a better capacity to handle the major difficulties facing the agricultural sector (Khumoetsile, 2021).

On this understanding, the Tanzanian government is promoting youth participation in agricultural activities to achieve its development goals. In Kyerwa district which is the focus of the study, the youth population is on average high (Kyerwa District Strategic Plan, 2016/2021). Like in any other part of the country, the rate of unemployment is high although the district is one among the districts with high agricultural potential in the country. This has made Kyerwa district government to have a district strategic agriculture plan that will pull youth in this potential sector. This is informed by the fact that the success of the agricultural sector depends on attracting young people to agricultural operations because youth is a dynamic workforce with high absorption of technological competence (Khumoetsile, 2021).

Young people's lack of access to agricultural information knowledge, and education is one of the six barriers listed by FAO (2014) that prevent them from working productively in the agriculture sector. Although access to information by farmers is crucial, many farmers in the developing world still lack access to the necessary information (Haumbaet *al.*, 2021). According to Ofuoku (2008) and Lughlugh (2020), agricultural information refers to all published knowledge in all aspects of agriculture, and the quality of such information depends on three attributes which are accuracy, timeliness and relevance. One of the most crucial tools for the development of Tanzania's agricultural sector is appropriate agricultural knowledge and information (Mkenda *et al.*, 2020). Sustainable Agricultural development cannot occur without modern knowledge, skills and technologies (Lughlugh, 2020).

Over the years traditional agricultural extension services has been a source of agriculture information, knowledge, and techniques such as field days, information desks, farmer field schools, training and visits, demonstration plots, agricultural shows, and exhibitions have been used to deliver agricultural information to the farmers (Maertens et al., 2021; Karanja et al., 2020). The conventional system has been criticized for ignoring youth and also its informational flow is unidirectional from knowledge-creating organs (KCOs) like research institutions and universities to consumers of the knowledge (COKs) who are mainly farmers (Mkenda et al., 2020). This has made access to agricultural information among youth to be difficult. Adegebo, (2016) and Lwoga *et al.* (2011) argue that, to increase small-scale agricultural production, improve rural livelihoods and strengthen food security, the agricultural sector needs the right system to improve the flow of information and knowledge from the researchers to the farmers.

According to Joshi, & Joshi, (2019) and Lughlugh (2020), for consistent growth in agricultural production, it is essential to equip rural farmers with need-based, accurate, reliable, and timely

Comment [j1]: Make the capital of every first word of abbreviation.

information. Therefore, young farmers need to be educated on the adoption of the contemporary agricultural technologies (Singh et al., 2016). The information needs of an individual or group of people largely depend on their day-to-day activities, either for solving problems or for awareness (Mkenda et al., 2020). Information needs of youth farmers can be classified according to the agriculture cycle and value chain line. The information needed by youth farmers includes a source of capital, source of inputs, climatic conditions, planting, soil conservation issues, crop protection, livestock-keeping practices, use of fertilizers, and proper storage of farming products, value addition and marketing. Information needs is a factual situation in which there is an interconnection between information and needs (Gudeta et al., 2023).

Comment [j2]: Reference details is missing.

Information needs can be recognized by the information seeker or by the information expert on behalf of the information seeker (Lwoga et al., 2010). However, the information seeker and an expert may need to work together towards disentangling and establishing the actual information needs (Hertzum & Simonsen, 2019; Lwoga et al., 2010). Information Seeking Behavior (ISB) is purposive in nature and is an outcome of a need to satisfy some objectives (Haumba et al., 2021). According to Pettigrew (1996) and Haumba et al. (2021), information-seeking behavior involves personal reasons for seeking information, the kinds of information that are being sought and the ways or sources in which the needed information is being sought. According to Rahman et al., (2020) in ISB on an agriculture basis, the process of agricultural information seeking involves several activities such as identifying information sources, consulting the sources and access as well as evaluating them for better results.

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Comment [j4]: Reference of Pettigrew (1996) is missing.

Furthermore, agricultural systems in developing countries are becoming more knowledge-intensive than resource-intensive, thus the role of information becomes very crucial. In this 21st century, owning the right information at the right time is utmost importance in everyone's life. Information ranks next to the basic human needs as air, water, food and shelter (Paul, & Frank, (2019); Gudeta et al., 2023). Agricultural information is a vital resource for agricultural development (Singh et al., (2021); Leontine, 2018). The information must be relevant and meaningful to farmers, in addition to being packaged and delivered in a way preferred by them (Diekmann et al., 2009; Babu et al., 2019).

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For the youth to continue engaging and adopt modern ways of agricultural practices are only possible with adequate information and the advancement of ICT as a source of information for improving farming practices. The evolution of ICT-based extension approaches has been received with hope since studies indicate that youth are faster in using ICT technologies including social media to access various agricultural information (Guanah et al. 2017 and Poushteret al. 2018). Moreover, studies indicate that social media can significantly increase farmers' access to information, especially young farmers. (Goyal, 2011; Dharanipriya & Karthikeyan, 2019). World Bank, 2016; Thakur and Chander, 2018), Social media are contemporary digital communication channels that enable interaction, participation, and information sharing among users. Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube (Meikle, 2016).

Currently, social media and online communication constitute of primary communication platforms for young people. Fabinu, (2014) and Alabi & Sani (2021) contend that social media can be a powerful tool for educating young people about agriculture and inspiring them to engage in agricultural or agro-based activities. Social media platforms are convenient to those

who need information instantly or do not have easy access to information (Kuria, 2014). Khumoetsile (2021) argues that social media can be used to trap young people into careers in agriculture since young people are technology enthusiasts therefore they are more disposed to various agricultural information from the social media platforms. Poushter et al. (2018) states that young generation in Sub-Saharan Africa are utilizing the internet more frequently than older ones. According to Guanahet *al.* (2017), currently, social media and online communication constitute primary communication platforms for young people.

It is clearly known that, majority of youth own smartphones and spend most their time on social media reading and communicating (Khumoetsile, 2021). It is professed that they can significantly increase farmers' access to information, especially young farmers (Goyal, 2011; Dharanipriya&Karthikeyan, 2019; World Bank, 2016; Thakur et al, 2018). In light of this, it is emphasized that youth can find agriculture exciting and appealing by using social media. An assessment of social media's impact on Tanzania youth reveals that 78.2% of youth do utilize social media and only 21.8% do not use social media (Mandalu, 2019). Despite the evident benefits of social media in the dissemination of agricultural information, it is not yet empirically proven if youth farmers in rural areas make use of social media to access agricultural information. Therefore, this study intends to examine the information needs and information-seeking behavior of youth individuals engaged in agriculture in the study area. Specifically, this study intends to:

- i. To identify information needs among youth engaged in agriculture in the study area
- ii. To assess information-seeking behavior among youth engaged in agriculture in the study area.

2.0 Theoretical framework

The study employs Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) and Cultivation Theory as pertinent frameworks for understanding the information needs and seeking behaviors of youth farmers. UGT posits that media consumption is goal-directed, with users actively seeking specific content to satisfy particular needs. According to Kuria (2014), this theory challenges the notion of passive media consumption, highlighting that users play an active role in selecting media that aligns with their desires. By identifying their specific needs such as acquiring knowledge about sustainable farming techniques, market trends, or weather conditions researchers can gain insight into the motivations that drive youth farmers to engage with agricultural information. Variables such as cognitive needs (e.g., information on innovative farming practices), affective needs (e.g., motivation derived from success stories), and social integrative needs (e.g., community engagement through social media) are crucial in understanding what youth farmers seek from their information sources.

To complement UGT, the study incorporates Cultivation Theory, proposed by Kahraman, (2020). *New vs Traditional Social Environments: Usage of Social Networks by Digital Natives for Interpersonal Communication.* This theory asserts that prolonged exposure to media can shape individuals' perceptions and attitudes toward reality. For youth farmers, consistent engagement with positive demonstrations of agriculture such as success stories and innovative practices can foster a more favorable view of the agricultural sector. Cultivation Theory suggests that the way agricultural practices are represented in media can influence information-seeking behaviors, potentially encouraging youth to pursue careers in agriculture or adopt new techniques. Key variables in this context may include exposure to agricultural media, perceived efficacy of information, and attitudes toward farming.

Together, these theories provide a robust framework for identifying the information needs and seeking behaviors of youth farmers. They highlight how the gratification derived from accessing relevant agricultural information can lead to positive behavioral changes, ultimately contributing to increased youth engagement in the agricultural sector. By understanding these dynamics, stakeholders can effectively support youth farmers in their quest for information, facilitating a flourishing agricultural community and driving sectorial change.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Description of the Study Area

This study was conducted at Kyerwa District in Kagera region, Tanzania. Kyerwa District is one of the eight (8) Districts in the Kagera region of Tanzania. The district covers approximately 3,086 Km² and is located between 2°15' and 30.15' South of the equator and between 31°00'- 32°00' east of Standard Meridian (Kyerwa District Strategic Plan, 2016/2021). Kyerwa District has four divisions which are Kaisho, Murongo, Nkwenda and Mabila, Out of the four divisions, this study was conducted at Kaisho division involving two wards, Isingiro and Kaisho ward. Within the two wards, two villages were randomly selected. The Kaisho Division was purposively selected due to the presence of large number of youths who are involving in agricultural activities. The district borders the Republic of Uganda in the North, and the Republic of Rwanda in the West. The District borders Karagwe District in the South East. Kyerwa District has a total of 93,838.3 hectare's arable land of which 72,840.4 Ha. Equivalent of 77.62% are arable land. The district is divided into three different agro-ecological zones which are very productive and supportive for Agricultural activities. The Kagera River forms the boundary between Kyerwa and the Republic of Rwanda and Uganda

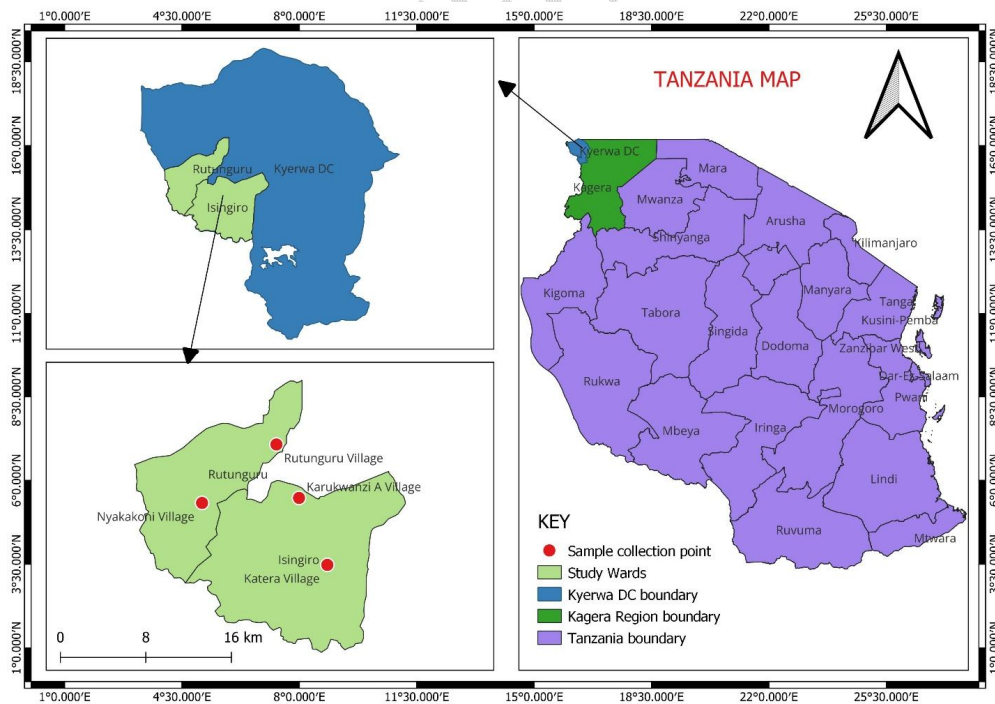


Figure 1: Map showing study area.

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The study adopted a cross-sectional research design, which is particularly advantageous for collecting data at a single point in time from a representative sample of the target population (Kothari, 2004). This design enables researchers to efficiently assess the information needs and information-seeking behaviors of youth farmers within a defined timeframe, facilitating a snapshot analysis of the population under study. The target population comprised 104 youth farmers from the Kaisho Division, along with key informants including one village executive officer, two ward executive officers, one ward extension officer, one division officer, and one agriculture officer from the district. To select the sample of youth farmers, simple random sampling was utilized, ensuring that each individual had an equal chance of being included. Meanwhile, the key informants were selected purposively, reflecting their specific roles and expertise in the agricultural sector.

Comment [j7]: Add subheading as Sampling.

The sample size of 104 youth farmers was computed using Kothari's formula for finite populations, which is designed to determine an appropriate sample size based on a known population size. Thus, an equal number of twenty-six youth farmers were drawn from each of the four randomly selected villages to form the study population. Data collection involved a range of instruments, including self-administered semi-structured questionnaires for youth farmers, and semi-structured interview schedules for key informants. Additionally, five focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with youth farmers one in each village to explore their agricultural information needs, information-seeking behaviors, and the challenges they face in accessing and utilizing agricultural information. The FGDs also examined the social media platforms predominantly used by youth for agricultural information. An observation checklist was employed to gather data regarding the types of phones used, communication infrastructure, cultural aspects (such as language and rituals), and the agricultural activities in which youth are engaged in the study area.

Comment [j8]: Add subheading as data collection and data analysis.

For data analysis, quantitative data were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, were utilized to analyze the demographic characteristics of respondents. Qualitative data obtained through observations and in-depth interviews were subjected to content analysis, where text was coded and organized into themes. This comprehensive analytical approach enabled the study to draw meaningful conclusions about the information needs and behaviors of youth farmers in Kyerwa District.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

4.1 Social economic characteristics

Study findings show that, in gender male youth are (54.8%) and female (45.2). In age, category findings show the aged 21-25 (32.7%) were more engaged than age above 31 years only (13.5%) and to marital status single were more engaged for (59.6%) than married (39%) and divorce only (1%). Males were more engaged in agriculture activities than females similar to (Egbofuku et al 2021). Levels of education findings shows that all of the categories did not reach 50% of the respondents who are engaged in agricultural activities such that secondary education levels only (45.2%), primary education levels (32.7%), certificate education level were (16.3%), diploma education level (3.8 %) and degree education level were only (1.9%). Furthermore, research shows that respondents possess ICT tools and use, were as basic phones (74%), smartphones (35.6%), (laptops (1.9%), and iPad were only (1.9%)

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(Guanah et al. 2017. As Poushter et al. 2018 depicts, thus ICTs improve information services and the government effort in the delivery of Extension and Advisory Services (EASs). Regardless of the potentiality of the ITCs devices in disseminating agricultural information, it has limitations on the big price of selling ICT devices, during mixed FGDS (males and females) in Isingiro youth farmers discuss and comment that “they like to use ICTS devices, but high selling cost of this gargets limit a large group of youth to own ICT tools what they want.”

Table 1: Demographic characteristics Demographic characteristics

| Variables | Categories | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender | Male | 57 | 54.8 |
| | Female | 47 | 45.2 |
| Age | 15 – 20 | 30 | 28.8 |
| | 21 – 25 | 34 | 32.7 |
| | 26 – 30 | 26 | 25.0 |
| | Above 31 | 14 | 13.5 |
| Marital status | Single | 62 | 59.6 |
| | Married | 41 | 39.4 |
| | Divorced | 1 | 1.0 |
| Level of education | Primary level | 34 | 32.7 |
| | Secondary level | 47 | 45.2 |
| | Certificate level | 17 | 16.3 |
| | Diploma level | 4 | 3.8 |
| | Degree level | 2 | 1.9 |
| ICT possession Basic phone | Use | 77 | 74.0 |
| | Not using | 27 | 26.0 |
| Smart phone | Use | 37 | 35.6 |
| | Not using | 67 | 64.4 |
| Laptop | Use | 2 | 1.9 |
| | Not using | 102 | 98.1 |
| IPad | Use | 2 | 1.9 |
| | Not using | 102 | 98.1 |
| | Total | 104 | 100.0 |

4.2 Information needs of the youth farmers

4.2.1 Interested in agriculture activities

The findings indicate a significant interest in agricultural activities among youth, with 95.2% of respondents eager to engage in this sector, aligning with Nyakiema's (2021) observations about the inclusivity and perceived status of agriculture. This suggests that agricultural sciences and related fields should prioritize research and educational initiatives that cater to this demographic, fostering knowledge transfer and skill development. The emphasis on accessibility implies that agricultural policies and programs must be designed to support diverse entry points for youth, regardless of their educational or socioeconomic backgrounds. Furthermore, this trend could lead to an increase in innovative practices and sustainable agriculture, as younger generations bring fresh perspectives and technologies to traditional

farming methods. Overall, the high engagement levels among youth present a critical opportunity for scientific research to focus on youth driven agricultural initiatives that could significantly enhance productivity and sustainability in the sector.

4.2.2 Agriculture Activity Youth farmers deal with

The study findings highlight the diverse agricultural activities undertaken by youth, with significant participation in crop farming (86.5%), animal husbandry (61.5%), and product marketing (65.4%), among others. This diversity underscores the necessity for tailored information services that align with the specific needs and activities of young farmers. As noted by Mkenda et al. (2020), the information requirements of individuals are closely linked to their daily tasks and challenges, suggesting that effective agricultural extension services must focus on providing relevant, practical knowledge that enhances the productivity and profitability of these activities. Furthermore, aligning with Lughugh's (2020) findings, there is a clear need for comprehensive support in areas such as access to quality inputs, financial services, and effective marketing strategies. Addressing these informational needs not only empowers youth farmers but also fosters innovation and efficiency within the agricultural sector, ultimately contributing to sustainable development and food security in the region.

4.2.3 Sources of agricultural information

The data presented in Table 2 identify eight agricultural information sources utilized by youth farmers, revealing a reliance on multiple channels rather than a single source for agricultural information. The top three sources—extension services (72.1%), television (67.3%), and social media (62.5%)—highlight the critical role of diverse information access in enhancing agricultural practices. This trend aligns with Turner and West (2010) and Kuria (2014), who emphasize that users actively engage with various media to fulfill their informational needs and achieve specific communication goals. The dominance of extension services suggests that direct, personal interaction with knowledgeable agents remains vital for effective knowledge dissemination. Meanwhile, the rising use of social media as a preferred source indicates its potential to enhance connectivity and real-time information sharing among youth farmers, offering a platform for collaborative learning and support. Given these findings, agricultural extension programs should focus on strengthening their outreach via these preferred channels while also leveraging social media to engage young farmers effectively. This approach can foster a more informed farming community, driving improved agricultural outcomes and sustainable practices across the region, as supported by studies highlighting the role of social media in expanding access to agricultural information (Goyal, 2011; Dharanipriya&Karthikeyan, 2019; World Bank, 2016; Thakur and Chander, 2018).

Comment [j10]: Reference of Turner and West (2010) is missing

Table 2 Information needs of the youth farmers

| Variable | Yes | | No | |
|--|-----|------|----|------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| If Interested in agriculture activities | 99 | 95.2 | 5 | 4.8 |
| Agriculture activity deal with | | | | |
| Farming crops | 90 | 86.5 | 14 | 13.5 |
| Keeping animals | 64 | 61.5 | 40 | 38.5 |
| Fishing keeping | 15 | 14.4 | 89 | 85.6 |
| Value addition | 49 | 47.1 | 55 | 52.9 |
| Marketing of the agricultural product | 68 | 65.4 | 36 | 34.6 |
| Agricultural information sources | | | | |
| Extension agents | 75 | 72.1 | 29 | 27.9 |
| Television | 70 | 67.3 | 34 | 32.7 |

| | | | | |
|---------------|----|------|----|------|
| Radio | 60 | 57.7 | 44 | 42.3 |
| Newspaper | 5 | 4.8 | 99 | 95.2 |
| Magazines | 5 | 4.8 | 99 | 95.2 |
| Agro dealers | 26 | 25.0 | 78 | 75.0 |
| Social Media | 65 | 62.5 | 39 | 37.5 |
| Other Farmers | 64 | 61.5 | 40 | 38.5 |

4.2.4 Agriculture information utilized by youth farmers

The findings from Table 3 highlight the seven most sought-after agricultural information categories among youth farmers, encompassing critical aspects of the agricultural cycle and value chain. The high percentages for best practices in livestock management (95.2%), crop management (94.2%), best seed information (93.3%), soil conservation (90.4%), planting information (89.4%), value addition (85.6%), and climatic conditions (85.4%) underscore the necessity for accessible and comprehensive agricultural knowledge. This aligns with Busindeli (2016), who emphasizes that agricultural knowledge spans various domains, including crop and livestock production, post-harvesting techniques, market dynamics, and climate-related information. The consistent pursuit of information by youth farmers indicates their awareness of its role in enhancing performance and addressing knowledge gaps. Ensuring that such vital information is readily available can significantly improve agricultural outcomes, fostering better production practices and sustainability. Consequently, agricultural policies and programs should prioritize the dissemination of relevant, timely information tailored to the specific needs of youth farmers, thereby equipping them with the tools necessary to optimize their agricultural practices and contribute positively to food security and economic stability in their communities.

Table 3 Agriculture information utilized by youth farmers

| Variables | Categories | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Climatic condition information | Utilizing | 92 | 88.5 |
| | Not utilizing | 12 | 11.5 |
| Information on planting before planting crops of the new season | Utilizing | 93 | 89.4 |
| | Not utilizing | 11 | 10.6 |
| Best seed information to use in your field | Utilizing | 97 | 93.3 |
| | Not utilizing | 7 | 6.7 |
| Information on soil conservation issues | Utilizing | 94 | 90.4 |
| | Not utilizing | 10 | 9.6 |
| Information on crop management in your field | Utilizing | 98 | 94.2 |
| | Not utilizing | 6 | 5.8 |
| Information on best practices for keeping livestock | Utilizing | 99 | 95.2 |
| | Not utilizing | 5 | 4.8 |
| Information on the value addition of any farm product | Utilizing | 89 | 85.6 |
| | Not utilizing | 15 | 14.4 |
| | Total | 104 | 100.0 |

4.2.5 Respondents opinion on the Extent to which information needs are addressed in study area

The study findings from Table 3 indicate that 80% of respondents believe their information needs are largely met by information providers, while 20% express dissatisfaction with the adequacy of the information received. This disparity highlights a significant challenge in

addressing diverse agricultural information needs, aligning with Lughlugh (2020), who notes the difficulties in identifying and satisfactorily addressing common information requirements, particularly in developing regions. The high percentage of respondents who feel their needs are met suggests that existing information services may be effective for a majority; however, the 20% dissatisfaction rate signals a critical gap that warrants attention. To improve agricultural outcomes, it is essential to adopt a more nuanced approach that recognizes the varied and specific needs of different farmers, particularly marginalized groups. This could involve tailoring information services to better align with the unique circumstances and challenges faced by these individuals, thereby enhancing overall satisfaction and fostering a more inclusive agricultural information ecosystem. Implementing feedback mechanisms could also help information providers continually adapt their offerings to meet evolving needs, ultimately contributing to more effective and sustainable agricultural practices in the region.

Table 4 Respondents opinion on the Extent to which information needs are addressed

| Opinion | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Very great extent | 20 | 19.2 |
| Great extent | 64 | 61.5 |
| Moderate extent | 15 | 14.4 |
| Small extent | 5 | 4.9 |
| Total | 104 | 100.0 |

4.3 Information seeking behavior

Youth farmers were further asked to indicate their level of agreement with statement posed with a view to establish key youth farmers' information seeking behavior. Level of agreements where disagree, neutral and agree.

Finding (Table 4) indicates that 97% of respondents agree that they compare information from different sources. Youth of (98.1%) agree that selecting a source is important. A significant portion of youth (94.3%) agrees that they need assistance from an intermediary. However, a large proportion of youth (98.1%) strongly agree that they don't know the information they need. Youth of (90.4%) agrees that it takes a lot of effort to search for information. The percentage of 83.7 youth agrees that it takes time to search for information. Correspondingly, most youth (88.5%) also agree that it is hard to decide which information to trust. The youth farmers of (90.4%) agree that it is beneficial to search for information. Numbers of youth (92.3%) agree that they gather much information as possible before making decisions. Lastly, a substantial proportion of youth (89.5%) agree that various and related information brings new attitudes in practices.

Since information-seeking behavior involves number of multi task like comparing information sources, selecting a source, seeking assistance from an intermediary, To having a personal influence on searching information's, gathering much information before making decisions, and agreeing that various and related information brings new attitudes in practices. Results are very similar with gratifications theory which states that media consumers are passive consumers of mass communications: rather they play an active role in media consumption. The theory

views users of mass media as active seekers of the specific media and specific contents to create desired satisfactions. This highlights their awareness of the impact that the choice of information source can have on the reliability and relevance of the information they receive. This is similar to what (Pettigrew 1996: Humba et al .2021) reported information-seeking behavior involves personal reasons for seeking information, the kind of information that is being sought, and the ways and the sources with which needed information is being sought.

Comment [j11]: Reference of Humba et al .2021 is missing

Also, this relates to what Leontine (2018) argues access to and use of agriculture information it increases knowledge, technical skills, and capacity to individuals in transforming and diversifying farming, livestock, and fishing activities. This reinforces youth farmer's positive attitude towards actively seeking knowledge and information, highlighting the importance of fostering information literacy skills and promoting self-directed learning. This result is related to what Kahraman, (2020) indicates in the cultivation theory "that media shapes people's sense of reality". The theory states that the people who spend most of their time watching mass media such as television are likely to be influenced by it. This signifies the potential for comprehensive information to drive positive behavioral changes and enhance agricultural practices.

As Leontine (2018) argue Agricultural information provision is also linked with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Strategic Plan and is reflected in the key initiative of Tanzania Development Vision 2025. Indeed, to support these initiatives libraries and information services stand in the right position to enable achievement of the entire UN 2030 Agenda by ensuring the effective dissemination of information to the end users. This behavior implies that youth farmers are actively seek information from multiple sources, which can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the topic at hand.

In contrary to information-seeking behavior a youth farmer who agrees that they don't know the information they need, agrees that it takes a lot of effort to search for information, youth farmers who agree that it takes time to search for information, correspondingly agree that it is hard to decide which information to trust and also youth farmers who agreed that they don't know the information they need this need intermediate to rescue the situation in order to address the agric. information needed by youth farmers and to foster the ISB.

Overwhelmed information on Social media has been reported and I greed by all five FGDs being a serious problem that face youth farmers when they need to explore informational (FGDs Isingiro&Katera villages, March 7&10, 2023). This suggests that they recognize the value of guidance and support in navigating and interpreting information effectively. This was also observed during focus group discussion "in both agriculture informational communication source that are used to reach us youth farmers, when expertise's who are embarked with knowledge on agriculture industries when they assist us, it always simplify the new idea and it adds to see all things are possible as also our parents have succession experience in farming to us"(FGD of youth males, Katera village, March 7).

Confession of youth farmers it takes a lot of efforts to search for information. This emphasizes the perceived challenges and dedication required to access relevant information, potentially indicating the need for user-friendly platforms and improved search strategies. However, a large proportion of youth strongly agree that they don't know the information they need. This indicates a lack of clarity or specific knowledge gaps among the youth, which may require targeted

interventions and educational resources to address. It is hard to decide which information to trust. This highlights the importance of enhancing critical evaluation skills and promoting the use of reliable sources to mitigate misinformation and ensure accurate decision-making to the informational seeker. Moreover, youth farmers feel confused by the information available. This underscores the necessity of clear and accessible information dissemination, improved information organization, and the provision of contextualized guidance. Likewise, youth farmers feel that it takes time to search for information. This indicates recognition of the time commitment required for effective information-seeking, which may call for efficient information delivery channels and streamlined access to relevant resources.

By using an observation list, the culture of these people can simply admit mention challenges in the information-seeking behavior of these youth farmers. By using their language, communication for change can be programmed, to the most preferred information source by information seekers. And this will create gratification for all information creators and informational seekers. This is similar to a study done by Bankole *et al.*, (2020) who reported that any innovation or idea that contradicts the culture of the people will be rejected. Also, religious intuition can positively help to organize youth into various groups which can be easily for them being reached through faith based organizations intervention programs such as social media usage.

Table 5 Information-seeking behavior among youth engaged in agriculture

| youth information seeking behavior | Disagree | Neutral | Agree |
|--|-------------|----------|-------------|
| I compare information from different sources | 2 (1.9%) | 1 (1.0%) | 101 (97.2%) |
| Selecting a source is important | 1 (1.0%) | 1 (1.0%) | 102 (98.1%) |
| I need assistance from an intermediary | 4 (3.9%) | 2 (1.9%) | 98 (94.3%) |
| I don't know information needed | 102 (98.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 2 (1.9%) |
| It takes a lot of effort to search information | 94 (90.4%) | 5 (4.8%) | 5 (4.8%) |
| It is hard to decide which information to trust | 92 (88.5%) | 6 (5.8%) | 6 (5.7%) |
| I feel confused by information available | 96 (92.3%) | 6 (5.8%) | 2 (1.9%) |
| I feel takes time to search for information | 87 (83.7%) | 8 (7.7%) | 9 (8.6%) |
| It is beneficial to search for information | 6 (5.8%) | 4 (3.8%) | 94 (90.4%) |
| I get information as much as possible before making a decision | 5 (4.8%) | 3 (2.9%) | 96 (92.3%) |
| Various and related information brings new attitude in practices | 6 (5.7%) | 5 (4.8%) | 93 (89.5%) |

Comment [j12]: Add explanation of the table.

NB: Numbers out of brackets are frequency and those in brackets percentage

5.0 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of youth as an integral part of the farming community capable of actively engaging in agriculture. As the future of the agricultural industry, youth are essential for maintaining food security, provided they are equipped with timely and relevant information. This aligns with Gratification Theory, which posits that individuals actively seek out media and information that meet their needs and interests. In this context, youth farmers demonstrate a strong information need and pronounced information-seeking behavior, actively searching for knowledge that can enhance their agricultural practices. Their enthusiasm for engaging in agricultural activities underscores the necessity for accessible agricultural information that fulfills these needs and drives their interest further.

To attract more youth to the agricultural sector, collaboration among stakeholders is vital. Organizations and individuals passionate about promoting youth involvement in agriculture must unite to drive transformative changes within the sector. This collective effort is crucial for developing effective communication strategies that resonate with this demographic, particularly when considering their media consumption patterns. By leveraging Cultivation Theory, which suggests that long-term exposure to media shapes individuals' perceptions and attitudes, stakeholders can create targeted communication that cultivates a positive image of agriculture among youth. Understanding the specific types of knowledge and information-seeking behaviors of youth farmers allows for the development of content that not only informs but also inspires sustained interest in agricultural careers.

In the 21st century, where information and communication technologies (ICTs) dominate the dissemination of information, it is imperative for agricultural information sources and knowledge-creating organizations (KCOs) to harness these technologies effectively. By utilizing digital platforms and tools, stakeholders can engage a larger number of youth farmers, facilitating the timely exchange of information that meets their needs. This approach will empower both information creators and seekers and significantly contribute to sustainable agricultural development in the country. Engaging youth through ICT can bridge the gap between information supply and demand, fostering a more informed and capable agricultural community that is not only aware of agricultural opportunities but also motivated to participate in shaping the future of the sector.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward

- i. A government, in collaboration with agriculture stakeholders, should be creative in preparing agriculture programs that will attract youth to the sector. The value of information needs assessment should not be overlooked, as engaging users of information will help agriculture information creators to create what is desired by users.
- ii. Social media should be recognized as a modern and rapid source of agricultural information, as well as a user-friendly ICT tool that is predominantly used by young people.
- iii. Agricultural information should be presented in a way that appeals to young people and encourages their involvement in the sector.
- iv. TANESCO authorities in Kyerwa should increase efforts to improve rural infrastructure, to ensure reliable electrical power supply to enhance social media utilization.

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