

## **Abstract**

Using the Personal Construct Theory, the Situated Learning Theory and the Activity Domain Theory, the study examined the relationship between information seeking behavior, community practices, coordination modalities, tool adoption and information literacy in smallholder farmers in Uganda. Despite interventions, Uganda's smallholder farmers remain below targeted productivity levels, threatening food security. Effective use of information is critical to improving practices, yet little is known about how information literacy develops in informal farming contexts. The study theorized and made hypotheses based on a success story of a smallholder farmer who successfully utilized information to improve her hitherto low productivity.

The study employed an explanatory cross-sectional research design as guided by critical realism philosophy. This entailed collecting both quantitative and qualitative data at a single point in time. Resultantly, quantitative data for the final study was collected from smallholder farmers in five districts in Central Uganda. Data was analyzed using SPSS for preliminary analysis and AMOS (Version 23) for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), with mediation tested through a bootstrap approach. Qualitative data was collected from eleven key informants and analyzed using the content analysis technique with the aid of NVivo (Version 11) software, through which themes and subthemes were generated.

The study found that information-seeking behavior, community practices, coordination modalities, and tool adoption directly influence information literacy. Unexpectedly, information-seeking behavior predicted tool adoption nor mediated this relationship. By integrating Situated Learning, Activity Domain, and Personal Construct theories, the study extends existing information literacy frameworks by highlighting how social and contextual aspects interact to foster information literacy among smallholder farmers.

The findings highlight the need for a dedicated National Information Literacy Policy to empower citizens, particularly smallholder farmers, to effectively access, evaluate, and use information to enhance their practices. For results also provide practical solutions that can be replicated by smallholder farmers to improve their productivity.

However, being a cross-sectional design, future studies may be required to analyze information literacy manifests over time. The study examined Information seeking behavior, coordination modalities, community practices and tool adoption in explaining information literacy. Future studies might consider exploring other factors.