

**A STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF RETIRED EX-
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSIONISTS IN THE
COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY OF THIKA
DISTRICT, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Extension service has been identified as one of the factors that contribute to high agricultural production. Farmers have been known to seek this essential service from the extension workers or persons whom they perceive to be very knowledgeable in the field of agriculture. Lack of provision of this essential service has forced the farmers to seek for alternative sources where they would get extension service. The objective of this study was to investigate the influence of retired ex-agricultural extensionists. The study was conducted in Thika District and the population comprised of 60 Retired Ex-Agricultural Extension Workers (RAEs) and 400 farmers neighbouring them. The specific objectives of the study were; to determine what influence professional training of RAEs have on their socio-characteristics, assess what influence RAEs have in offering the extension services to the community, assess what influence RAEs involved in farming business have on agricultural productivity within the communities in which they live and to investigate the socio-economic influence in the community attributed to the presence of RAEs.

Stratified Random Sampling was used to select three samples. Questionnaires, observation and interviews were used to collect data. The statistical package for social science (SPSS) was used to analyse the data.

The results of the t-test analysis indicated that there was a significant difference between the mean scores, $t(60) = 8.122$, $P < 0.05$. This implied that the level of training of RAEs influences their socio-economic characteristics and this influenced the social characteristics in the community in which they lived in. The results further indicated that majority of the retirees were involved in leadership function, thereby influencing various issues that affected the community while, 80% of the retirees provided extension services informally. When comparison in agricultural production was done the results of the regression model $t=2.822$ indicated that the betta coefficient was significantly greater than 0.05, $p=0.07$ which was greater than $p=0.05$ the test statistic. This indicated that there was a strong difference in agricultural production between retirees and normal farmers. Noting the contribution that the RAEs are making in the community, a policy needs to be put in place on how they- RAEs can be better utilized. This is to imply that if the RAEs are involved in extension and production processes, there is a likelihood for agricultural sector to gain its' lost glory.