

Abstract

Banana value added products like flour has more economic impact to raw bananas as witnessed in Kisii County. Farmers in Tharaka Nithi County are still reluctant to uptake banana value addition despite its accrued economic benefits and emphasis by stakeholders. This study identified the socio-economic and production factors affecting uptake of banana value addition among smallholders in Chuka Sub-County. The study adopted a descriptive research design whereby frequency tables whereby both qualitative and quantitative data was collected. The target population was 20,180 banana farming households in Chuka Sub-County and 3 key informants. Purposive sampling, Random sampling and snowballing techniques were used to select the 156 banana farmers. A pilot study of 24 (15% of sample size) households was done in Imenti South and the questionnaire was found to be reliable (Cronbach alpha value, $\alpha < 0.785$). With a 90% return rate of the research tool, the data collected was analyzed using SPSS version 25 and presented using frequency tables. Binary logistic regression was used to test the levels of significance of variables and the model through the Hosmer & Lemeshow test of the goodness of fit suggested that the it was good for fit to the data as $p = 0.480 (> 0.05)$ while ANOVA analyses were used to check the presence of multicollinearity. All the variables had a variance inflation factor value of less than 10, thus indicating the absence of multicollinearity. It was noted that only 31.9% of farmers uptake banana value addition and there were no banana value addition technologies identified with 35.6% and 64.4% of those who uptake doing banana ripening for sale and bulk packaging respectively. The results at 5% level of significance showed that group membership ($p = 0.009$), access to credit ($p = 0.004$) and scale of production ($p = 0.000$) had a positive and significant effect on the uptake of banana value addition by farmers at varying degrees; result indicated that farming experience, farm size and varieties planted had a positive effect on the uptake, but they were statistically insignificant. This study recommended that; farmers to be encouraged to form cooperatives on value addition, the government and other stakeholders in conjunction with financial institutions to streamline policies to enhance farmers to access credit for farming easily among others. In conclusion, scale of production, accessibility to credit and group membership are affecting the uptake of banana value addition by farmers in Chuka Sub-County hence need to be considered in order to promote farmers general welfare whilst tremendously contributing to the economic growth of our country at large.