A Framework for Assessing the Usefulness of Rice Extension Materials in the Philippines

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Abstract
Agriculture contributes one-third of the Philippine economy and rice farming is the major occupation of the 2.5 million rice farmers. Rice farming represents 21% of the gross value added (GVA) of agriculture. Furthermore, rice has a significant role in the economy and politics of the Philippines. Amplification of the importance of rice in the Philippine economy and culture should be paralleled with strengthening of efforts at the local and national levels. Currently, extension has been viewed as a weak link in Philippine rice agriculture. Balisacan and Sebastian (2006) suggested that efforts should be refocused on extension especially in the areas of production and dissemination of rice extension materials.

Rice extension materials, also known as knowledge products (KPs), communicate new advances in rice research and development (R&D) and bridge the gap between R&D institutions and the larger rice clients and stakeholders. In the Philippines, rice information is transferred through traditional delivery methods and the emerging information and communication technology (ICT)-mediated extension. The poster presents a framework for assessing the usefulness of rice extension materials to farmers, extension agents, and rice-related organizations. Preferred rice information channels and how shifts in mass communication can benefit the Philippine national extension system were examined. The framework assessed the value of the traditional methods and encouraged rice R&D institutions to probe into the worth of ICTs as vehicles for reaching development goals such as provision of timely and accessible rice information. The assessment helps extension professionals and communication experts develop rice extension materials and information delivery mechanisms in keeping with the changes that are occurring in the information technology sector.

Keywords: rice extension materials, assessment, framework, Philippines