

Review of: "The Contribution of Subsistence Agriculture to the Livelihoods of the Smallholder Farmers in South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of Congo"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The paper contributes to a significant socioeconomic aspect of current affairs. However, the paper builds arguments on rather old literature that is inconsistently built back and forth. Despite this, there is a great attempt to make the paper flow and the arguments closed. There are, however, some aspects that can be considered, namely:

- Title: Consider removing all the 'the' in the title
- Introduction: Page 2/19, Paragraph 1. The paper tells us about the sizes of land for subsistence agriculture but fails to tell us the corresponding livelihood sustenance, so that it is known which factors contribute, i.e., is it the size of the land or also modernization aspects therein in terms of seeds, fertilizers, extension, or kind of production capital invested. Paragraph 2: Sustainable livelihood strategies .. It is not strategies but components, as espoused in Page 9/19, Paragraph 1.
- Update statistics for South Kivu in P3/19 to more recent ones to support/complement the current old statistics and citations.
- In the methodology, it is a bit puzzling that the sampled household heads were all male and had wives! Was there an inclusion and exclusion criteria to arrive at this? So does it mean there are no households headed by females or yet to marry or divorced? Are there other studies before to corroborate your findings? I find this puzzling and out of the normal study results that need substantiation!
- In Table 3, introduce a column for % after frequency (F) since it is a distribution issue. Why is FAO 2005 used for the study results categorization? No recent reference? Why not use poverty data or any other authoritative source showing income status? This needs to be justified.
- Page 8/19: Give the statistics in Paragraph 1 in Table 3, i.e., land size, type of crops grown, level of yields, use (subsistence, subsistence and sale of surplus, or commercial), etc.
- Page 10/19: I find the interpretation of human capital 'due to high skills and competencies' puzzling! Perhaps family labor and not hired labor, or even labor intensive and thus no mechanization. On 'Natural capital had ...' reference to ash and fermented household food waste is presumptuous since there is no data to support or even a citation. Perhaps sentence 2 cannot be validated as well!
- Consider merging Table 5 and 8.
- Discussion: Paragraph 1: Tools, use of ash, etc., were not in the results section, so how do they appear here? This is

so with the variety of crops as well, which was just mentioned in passing with no results, even without supportive data or citations! Results didn't give us sources of seeds and whether improved or not, and level of yields, yet it is projected that in the discussion.

- Conclusion should be a single paragraph and reflect on the title and objectives earlier outlined as well.