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Gender-based discrimination in service provision: Evidence from maize agro-input dealing in Uganda

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Abstract

Existing literature highlights gender-based discrimination faced by farmers downstream in food supply chains, however, upstream service provision along food supply chains have not yet been explored enough to investigate gender-based inequities. This research contributes to existing literature on constrained access to good quality maize seeds and improved varieties for female farmers by providing evidence on gender-based discrimination faced by Ugandan maize farmers in service provision from agro-input dealers, further emphasising the importance of reliable service provision in agricultural yields. Furthermore, this study also tests for gender homophily.

Pooled data (over time) from maize supply chain surveys are used which includes several potential indicators for service provision from agro-input dealers. These include feasibility to return the seed and obtain a refund in the case of problems with the seed, credit provisions, receipt of training or suggestions on the usage of improved varieties of seeds, provision of home delivery, other after-sales services, options of various payment methods and possibility to buy smaller quantities of seeds among others. Exploiting the dyadic nature of the farmer-dealer, averages of the services received by female and male farmers are compared using OLS regression on farmer-level averages while controlling for farmer-level characteristics with standard errors clustered at the dealer level. Then, dealer-level fixed effects model is employed to remove all dealer level heterogeneity while controlling for farmer level characteristics with standard errors clustered at the farmer level. Gender homophily is evaluated by adding an interaction term for the dealer's gender. We find preferential treatment for male farmers in the provision of services from agro-input dealers, indicating disadvantaged positions of female maize farmers in service provision. However, gender homophily is not observed. Our results motivate policies for correction of gender-based discrimination in service provision to help form better and equal aspirations and expectations of both female and male farmers.

Keywords: Agricultural service provision, gender, Uganda

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