

Review Form 3

Journal Name:	Asian Research Journal of Agriculture
Manuscript Number:	Ms_ARJA_126554
Title of the Manuscript:	Assessment of Agricultural Extension in Conflict Affected Areas of Mindanao, Philippines
Type of the Article	Original Research Article

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PART 1: Review Comments

Compulsory REVISION comments	Reviewer’s comment	Author’s Feedback <i>(Please correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)</i>
Please write a few sentences regarding the importance of this manuscript for the scientific community. Why do you like (or dislike) this manuscript? A minimum of 3-4 sentences may be required for this part.		
Is the title of the article suitable? (If not please suggest an alternative title)		
Is the abstract of the article comprehensive? Do you suggest the addition (or deletion) of some points in this section? Please write your suggestions here.		
Are subsections and structure of the manuscript appropriate?		
Please write a few sentences regarding the scientific correctness of this manuscript. Why do you think that this manuscript is scientifically robust and technically sound? A minimum of 3-4 sentences may be required for this part.		
Are the references sufficient and recent? If you have suggestions of additional references, please mention them in the review form.		
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Minor REVISION comments		
Is the language/English quality of the article suitable for scholarly communications?		
Optional/General comments	<p>After Review Comments:</p> <p>On Abstract</p> <p>This study offers a valuable assessment of agricultural extension in conflict-affected areas, highlighting its potential to enhance livelihoods, social capital, and peace building in Mindanao. The model's application and findings are clear, with impressive results in economic improvement, social cohesion, and environmental practices. I recommend expanding the discussion on specific peace building mechanisms, clarifying methodological limitations, and providing more detailed insights into the linkages between agricultural practices and environmental outcomes.</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>This introduction effectively outlines the historical, social, and economic context of conflict in Mindanao and its impact on agricultural livelihoods. The 'LIFE' model's principles are well-aligned with participatory and decentralized approaches, emphasizing farmer empowerment and peace building. However, the introduction could benefit from additional context on how the model specifically addresses gender-based challenges and the role of extension in fostering resilience amidst multi-faceted conflicts. Study is timely and relevant for sustainable development in conflict-affected areas. Clarifying the application of the evaluation criteria within the case studies would also strengthen the setup.</p> <p>Methods</p> <p>The methodology section provides a clear outline of the case study sites, sample size, data collection, and analytical approach. However, more detail on the sampling strategy and any challenges faced during data collection would strengthen transparency. It would also be beneficial to specify the rationale for using a paired t-test over other potential analyses, and to discuss any limitations of self-assessment measures in capturing nuanced changes in KASA and social capital. Overall, the methods are well-chosen and appropriate for evaluating the impact of the LIFE model on these communities.</p> <p>Results</p> <p>The results section provides a detailed and comprehensive overview of the demographic, economic, social, and environmental impacts of the LIFE model. The significant improvements across income, lifestyle, KASA, social capital, and environmental practices are well-documented and reinforce the model's efficacy. However, greater clarity in presenting quantitative data—such as using more charts or tables for ease of comparison—would enhance readability. Additionally, providing a more nuanced analysis of demographic impacts on outcomes, especially regarding gender differences, would deepen the insights. Overall, the findings highlight a meaningful shift towards sustainable livelihoods in conflict-affected areas.</p> <p>Discussion and Conclusions</p> <p>The discussion and conclusions effectively highlight the LIFE model's positive impacts across economic, social, and environmental domains, providing a persuasive case for its role in livelihood enhancement and conflict resilience. The link to Longley et al. (2006) and the contextual insights on conflict-affected rural livelihoods reinforce the relevance of the model's self-help approach in Mindanao. The statistically significant results on income, KASA, social capital, and environmental practices underscore the model's multidimensional impact. However, it would strengthen the discussion to</p>	<p>I do not feel that these matters need, or should, appear in the abstract. However, the abstract has been rewritten to better encapsulate what is in the paper.</p> <p>This paper is not specifically concerned with a description of the model or how it was applied (see para 4 in the Introduction, specifically around the Vock et al reference). The application of the model is described elsewhere (Vock et al reference again plus other articles in that same journal issue (now alluded to in the manuscript)). Our main focus here is to attempt to make a <i>multidimensional</i> (physical, economic, social and environmental) evaluation which has rarely been attempted, at least in this type of context. Regarding the 'Clarifying the application....' comment, we felt that material was better placed in the 'results' section to give the paper a better flow.</p> <p>Paired t-tests were used because the desired comparison is between the same respondents (or subjects) for two periods (before and after). To determine whether the change in income and savings before and after the LIFE program is statistically significant, the appropriate statistical test is paired t-test. This sentence is now included in the paper.</p> <p>Regarding limitations to self assessment, we have now included a comment on this point in the paper:</p> <p>Self-assessment of interventions and teaching has some theoretical limitations [14], but also some pluses. Specifically, the self-assessment aspect of the model outcomes, as undertaken here, is very low cost. Furthermore, several of the assessment parameters are not amenable to empirical measurement, due to their inherently subjective nature. Finally self-assessment is fully compatible with the interactive nature of the LIFE model as elucidated in principle number 4 of the model (see Introduction): 'for farmers to take ownership of the change process, it needs to be as participatory as possible, with farmers taking the major responsibility for decision-making'.</p>

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	<p>consider potential challenges or limitations of the LIFE model in diverse conflict settings. Additionally, future studies could benefit from a comparative analysis of similar models to better generalize findings across contexts.</p> <p>Reference</p> <p>The references provide a solid theoretical foundation for the LIFE model evaluation, linking agricultural extension with sustainable rural livelihoods, social capital, and conflict-affected areas. Key works, such as Birkhaeuser et al. (1991) on economic impacts of extension, Scoones (1998) on sustainable livelihoods, and Farr (2004) on social capital, substantiate the multidimensional approach to the analysis. The inclusion of longitudinal studies, such as Menz & Predo (2019), enriches understanding of LIFE's financial sustainability. For clarity and depth, integrating recent perspectives (e.g., World Bank 2011 on conflict and development) strengthens the broader implications of agricultural extension in challenging contexts.</p> <p>Tables and figures</p> <p>The tables and figure present a comprehensive quantitative summary of the LIFE model's impacts. Table 1 highlights significant income and savings increases, with paired t-test results. Table 2 showing statistically robust changes. Table 3 effectively illustrates lifestyle improvements in spending on essentials and agricultural inputs, indicating enhanced well-being and financial resilience. The high average change levels. Table 4 for KASA (Knowledge, Attitude, Skills, and Aspirations) further support the model's developmental impact. Table 5 on social capital changes reinforces the model's influence on group dynamics, institutional connections, and community trust, though the slight variations in trust between communities could be noted for further exploration.</p>	<p>With the passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, there is expected to be a strong increase in the Philippines and internationally in funding agricultural livelihood activities in Mindanao. The multifaced assessment of benefits is somewhat unique and the resulting quantification of the benefits demonstrates that additional funding and more diverse applications could be warranted.</p> <p>Agree but such analyses were outside the scope of the study</p> <p>Same comment as above</p>
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PART 2:

	Reviewer's comment	Author's comment (if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)
Are there ethical issues in this manuscript?	(If yes, Kindly please write down the ethical issues here in details)	