Human Survey on Farmer Knowledge, Perceptions, And Practices on Garlic-Based Bio Pesticides in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2025.100600107

Received: 31 May 2025; Accepted: 10 June 2025; Published: 16 July 2025

ABSTRACT

The use of bio pesticides, such as garlic (Allium sativum L.), offers a promising alternative to synthetic chemical pesticides in managing sap-sucking and arachnid pests in tomato production. Despite laboratory and field evidence supporting the efficacy of garlic-based bio pesticides, adoption among smallholder farmers remains limited. This study investigates farmer knowledge, perceptions, and practices regarding garlic-based bio pesticides in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe. The research aims to identify factors influencing adoption and provide insights into promoting sustainable pest management practices among smallholder farmers.

Key terms: Garlic-Based Bio pesticides, Pest Management.

INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of bio pesticides, such as garlic (Allium sativum L.), in managing sap-sucking and arachnid pests in tomato production has been increasingly recognized as an environmentally sustainable alternative to synthetic chemical pesticides. Bio pesticides are derived from natural materials like plants, bacteria, and minerals, and are known to pose minimal risk to human health, beneficial organisms, and the environment (Isman, 2020). Garlic-based bio pesticides, in particular, have demonstrated notable pesticidal properties due to their sulfur-containing compounds such as allicin, which has repellent and insecticidal effects on pests like aphids, whiteflies, and mites (Augustine et al., 2022).

Despite the proven efficacy of garlic in laboratory and field conditions, the adoption of bio pesticides among smallholder farmers remains limited. The gap between proven scientific knowledge and on-the-ground adoption can often be explained by socio-economic, cognitive, and institutional factors, including farmers' knowledge, perceptions, risk aversion, access to training, and market availability (Kassie et al., 2015). Farmers' perceptions of garlic's efficacy relative to conventional chemical pesticides significantly influence their willingness to adopt it. For instance, farmers may perceive bio pesticides as slower-acting or less effective, even when evidence suggests otherwise (Chikoye et al., 2019).

This study aimed to evaluate how farmers' understanding and perceptions of garlic as a bio pesticide compare to chemical pesticides in controlling tomato pests, while also examining their actual use of garlic-based bio pesticides in agricultural practices. To address the hypothesis that farmers perceive garlic-based bio pesticides as equally or more effective than synthetic pesticides, a structured questionnaire was employed to gather data on three key dimensions: knowledge, perceptions, and practices (KPP) related to pest control methods in tomato farming (Midega et al., 2016).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Site Description

Matabeleland North, a region in Zimbabwe, is characterized by a tropical savanna climate with distinct wet and dry seasons (Manyanhaire et al., 2022). The temperature ranges from a minimum of 2°C in winter to a maximum of 43°C in summer, with summer temperatures typically ranging from 23°C to 34°C and winter temperatures

ISSN No. 2454-6194 | DOI: 10.51584/IJRIAS |Volume X Issue VI June 2025

ranging from 11°C to 20°C (Mlambo, 2020). The region experiences heavy rainfall during the summer months, with January receiving the most rainfall at 174 mm, followed by February with 220 mm (Chikodzi & Murwendo, 2020). In contrast, the dry season, which spans from June to August, receives negligible rainfall. Humidity levels are high during the wet season, peaking at 85% in January and dropping to 27% in October (Manyanhaire et al., 2022).

Matabeleland North has a variety of soil types, including sandy soils and clay soils, which are suitable for different types of crops (Nyamadzawo et al., 2021). The region's agricultural sector is significant, with crops such as maize, cotton, and tobacco being grown (Mashingaidze et al., 2020). The region's climate and soil support both crop and livestock farming, with cattle, goats, and sheep being raised for meat, milk, and other essential products (Mavunganidze et al., 2021).

The region is home to several irrigation schemes, including the Hwange, Lupane, and Bubi irrigation schemes, which play a crucial role in supporting agricultural activities (Government of Zimbabwe, 2020). These schemes provide water for irrigation, enabling farmers to grow crops throughout the year and improve food security. Tomato farming is one of the activities supported by these irrigation schemes, contributing to the province's agricultural productivity.

According to Mavunganidze et al. (2021), understanding the climate dynamics is essential for developing strategies to optimize agricultural outputs and mitigate climate-related risks. Manyanhaire et al. (2022) also emphasize the importance of adapting to climate change to ensure sustainable agricultural practices in the region.3.2.2 Experimental materials, design and procedure

Experimental Design

The study employed a survey research design, utilizing a structured questionnaire to collect data from farmers in the selected districts.

Data Collection Procedure

An online KoBo-powered structured questionnaire was used to collect demographic data, assess awareness of garlic-based bio pesticides, and explore farmers' perceptions of their efficacy and safety. It also investigated current pest control practices and identified constraints to the adoption of garlic-based solutions. Understanding these factors is critical because knowledge and perception gaps can lead to underutilization of sustainable pest control methods (Kansiime et al., 2017).

A proportional sampling strategy was used to sample evenly across research sites by their contribution to the total sample. The study was carried out in two Zimbabwean districts (Bubi and Hwange), and a total of 155 of the possible 217 respondents participated. The number of samples was calculated through the formula for n calculation by Yamane: $n = N / (1 + N * e^2)$, where n = sample size, N = population size, and e = acceptable level of precision.

A combined 98 respondents were interviewed, 37 were from Chentali and 61 were from Lukhosi in Hwange District. In Bubi District, Pollard's sample was 57 respondents. The selection process of farmers interviewed was determined from an existing local list, and random sampling via Excel's function RANDBETWEEN was done to ensure non-biased selection.

With this sampling approach, the knowledge, perception, and practices of farmers could be more balanced and compared across various agro-ecological and socio-economic zones as suggested by Mutambara et al. (2020). The questionnaire was pretested at the Lukhosi Irrigation Scheme before the main data collection commenced. The pilot assisted in resolving translation issues, including translation of the instrument into Nambya and Tonga. Enumerators were employed on the basis of their proficiency in these local languages to carry out culturally sensitive and accurate data collection.

ISSN No. 2454-6194 | DOI: 10.51584/IJRIAS |Volume X Issue VI June 2025

Statistical Analysis

Data analysis included both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions and percentages provided an overview of the farmers' responses and revealed patterns in knowledge, perceptions, and practices. Chi-square tests were applied to examine associations between variables like education level, farming experience, and perceptions of garlic's effectiveness. Cross-tabulations were used to compare pest control practices among groups with different knowledge levels, revealing the influence of knowledge and perception on practice (Zarrouk et al., 2018).

This mixed-methods approach provided a holistic understanding of the barriers and enablers influencing the adoption of garlic-based bio pesticides. The study contributes to the growing body of literature aimed at enhancing sustainable pest management practices by promoting the adoption of environmentally safe, cost-effective, and locally available alternatives in smallholder tomato production systems (Belmain et al., 2021).

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics of Respondent Demographics and Farming Experience

Table 1 Demographics

Descriptive Statistics					
Questions	**N**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
2.Age of respondent	155	32	75	50.84	10.507
5.Number of years in farming	155	9	35	18.48	5.553
19. What is the age range of farmers	145	1	3	1.66	0.81
20.Ranges in experience in farming	152	1	3	1.33	0.499
Valid N	142				

The demographic analysis of the respondents reveals that their ages ranged from 32 to 75 years, with a mean age of 50.84 years (SD = 10.51), indicating that most participants were middle-aged to older adults. This age range is typical of many rural agricultural populations, where farming is predominantly practiced by older individuals due to youth migration to urban areas. In terms of farming experience, the respondents had between 9 and 35 years of involvement in agriculture, with an average of 18.48 years (SD = 5.55), reflecting substantial engagement in farming activities over time. When categorizing age using coded ranges, the mean score was 1.66 (SD = 0.81), suggesting a concentration of farmers within the middle-aged bracket (e.g., 46–60 years). Similarly, experience in farming also showed a majority within the category of less than 20 years, with a mean score of 1.33 (SD = 0.50). These findings illustrate that while most farmers have longstanding experience, there is still a significant portion who may benefit from additional training or exposure to newer agricultural innovations such as bio pesticides.

Cross-tabulation of Farmer Education Level and Belief in the Effectiveness of Garlic-Based Bio-pesticides in Tomato Production

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics and Belief in Garlic-Based Bio pesticides

Responses	**% and counts**	**No Formal Education**	**Primary Education**	**Secondary Education**	**Tertiary Education**	
Strongly Agree	**Count**	**0**	**2**	**13**	**1**	**16**

ISSN No. 2454-6194 | DOI: 10.51584/IJRIAS |Volume X Issue VI June 2025

	% within believe	0.00%	12.50%	81.30%	6.30%	100.00%
	% within education	0.00%	6.50%	12.00%	7.70%	10.30%
	% of Total	0.00%	1.30%	8.40%	0.60%	10.30%
Agree	**Count**	**3**	**28**	**87**	**6**	**124**
	% within believe	2.40%	22.60%	70.20%	4.80%	100.00%
	% within education	100.00%	90.30%	80.60%	46.20%	80.00%
	% of Total	1.90%	18.10%	56.10%	3.90%	80.00%
Neutral	**Count**	**0**	**1**	**8**	**1**	**10**
	% within believe	0.00%	10.00%	80.00%	10.00%	100.00%
	% within education	0.00%	3.20%	7.40%	7.70%	6.50%
	% of Total	0.00%	0.60%	5.20%	0.60%	6.50%
Strongly Disagree	**Count**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**5**	**5**
	% within believe	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	% within education	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	38.50%	3.20%
	% of Total	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.20%	3.20%
Total	**Count**	**3**	**31**	**108**	**13**	**155**
	% within believe	1.90%	20.00%	69.70%	8.40%	100.00%
	% within education	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	% of Total	**1.90%**	**20.00%**	**69.70%**	**8.40%**	**100.00%**

The cross tabulation results reveal that belief in the effectiveness of garlic-based bio pesticides varies with the level of education. Among farmers with no formal education, all respondents (100%) agreed that garlic bio pesticides are effective. Those with primary education showed a strong belief, with 90.3% agreeing and only 3.2% remaining neutral. The largest group, farmers with secondary education, also predominantly agreed (80.6%), while 12% strongly agreed and 7.4% were neutral. Interestingly, farmers with tertiary education displayed more diverse opinions: only 46.2% agreed, 7.7% strongly agreed or were neutral, and a notable 38.5% strongly disagreed, the only group to express strong disagreement. Overall, 80% of all respondents agreed with the effectiveness of garlic-based bio-pesticides, suggesting a generally positive perception, though belief appears to decrease slightly as education level increases, especially at the tertiary level.

The Chi-Square test shows a statistically significant association between farmers' education level and their belief in the effectiveness of garlic-based bio-pesticides ($\chi^2 = 59.076$, df = 9, $p < 0.001$). This means that farmers' beliefs differ notably based on their level of education.

ISSN No. 2454-6194 | DOI: 10.51584/IJRIAS |Volume X Issue VI June 2025

Cross-tabulation of Sex of Respondent and Use of Garlic-Based Bio-pesticides on Tomato Crops in the Past Year

Table 3: Gender and Frequency of Garlic-Based Bio-pesticide Use

Gender	% and count	Occasionally	Always	Often	Total
Female	**Count**	**78**	**1**	**23**	**102**
	% within gender	76.50%	1.00%	22.50%	100.00%
	% within use	65.00%	50.00%	69.70%	65.80%
	% of Total	50.30%	0.60%	14.80%	65.80%
Male	**Count**	**42**	**1**	**10**	**53**
	% within gender	79.20%	1.90%	18.90%	100.00%
	% within use	35.00%	50.00%	30.30%	34.20%
	% of Total	27.10%	0.60%	6.50%	34.20%
Total	**Count**	**120**	**2**	**33**	**155**
	% within gender	77.40%	1.30%	21.30%	100.00%
	% within use	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	% of Total	**77.40%**	**1.30%**	**21.30%**	**100.00%**

A total of 155 respondents participated in the survey to assess the relationship between sex and the frequency of using garlic-based bio pesticides on tomato crops over the past year. Among the respondents, 102 (65.8%) were female and 53 (34.2%) were male. The majority of both females (76.5%) and males (79.2%) reported using the bio pesticides occasionally. A smaller proportion of females (22.5%) and males (18.9%) used them often, while very few used them always (1.0% of females and 1.9% of males). Overall, 77.4% of all respondents used garlic-based bio pesticides occasionally, 21.3% used them often, and only 1.3% used them always. In terms of usage distribution across gender, females made up 65% of occasional users, 69.7% of often users, and 50% of the always users. Males accounted for 35%, 30.3%, and 50% of the respective categories. A Chi-Square test was conducted to determine if there was a significant association between sex and frequency of use. The results indicated no statistically significant association ($\chi^2 = 0.479$, df = 2, $p = 0.787$), suggesting that the frequency of using garlic-based bio pesticides does not significantly differ between male and female respondents. However, it is important to note that two cells (33.3%) had expected counts less than 5, which may affect the reliability of the test results.

Association Between Awareness of Garlic as a Bio-pesticide and Its Use in Tomato Crop Pest Management

Table 4: Awareness and Use of Garlic as a Bio-pesticide

12. Would you recommend garlic-based bio pesticides to other farmers?				
8a. Have you ever heard about the use of garlic as a bio pesticide in crop pest management?				
Responses	% and count	No	Yes	Total

No	**Count**	**6**	**3**	**9**
	% within recommendation	66.70%	33.30%	100.00%
	% within awareness	66.70%	2.10%	5.80%
	% of Total	3.90%	1.90%	5.80%
Yes	**Count**	**3**	**143**	**146**
	% within recommendation	2.10%	97.90%	100.00%
	% within awareness	33.30%	97.90%	94.20%
	% of Total	1.90%	92.30%	94.20%
Total	**Count**	**9**	**146**	**155**
	% within recommendation	5.80%	94.20%	100.00%
	% within awareness	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	% of Total	**5.80%**	**94.20%**	**100.00%**

A cross tabulation was conducted to examine the relationship between awareness of garlic as a bio pesticide and the actual use of garlic-based bio pesticides on tomato crops in the past year. Out of the 155 respondents, 146 (94.2%) had heard about the use of garlic as a bio pesticide, while 9 (5.8%) had not. Among those who were aware, 76.7% used garlic-based bio pesticides occasionally, 1.4% always, and 21.9% often. In contrast, among those who had never heard about garlic as a bio pesticide, 88.9% reported occasional use and 11.1% reported often use, with none using it always. This suggests that some respondents used the bio pesticides even without prior knowledge of garlic's role in pest management. In terms of total usage, those who were aware of garlic's bio pesticide potential accounted for 93.3% of occasional users, 100% of always users, and 97% of often users. A Pearson Chi-Square test was conducted to assess the significance of the relationship between awareness and use. The results showed no statistically significant association ($\chi^2 = 0.751$, df = 2, p = 0.687). It is important to note, however, that three cells (50%) had expected counts less than 5, which could impact the accuracy of the test. Therefore, while the data suggest that awareness may not strongly influence usage frequency, the results should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size in the "not aware" group.

Influence of Training on Farmers' Willingness to Recommend Garlic-Based Bio pesticides

Table 5 : Influence of Training on Willingness to Recommend Garlic-Based Bio pesticides

12.Would you recommend garlic-based bio-pesticides to other				
Responses	**8b. Have you received any training or information on preparing or using garlic-based bio pesticides for pest control?**			
	Responses	No	Yes	Total
No	**Count**	**9**	**0**	**9**
	% within recommendation	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
	% within received any training	7.20%	0.00%	5.80%
	% of Total	5.80%	0.00%	5.80%

Yes	**Count**	**116**	**30**	**146**
	% within recommendation	79.50%	20.50%	100.00%
	% within received any training	92.80%	100.00%	94.20%
	% of Total	74.80%	19.40%	94.20%
Total	**Count**	**125**	**30**	**155**
	% within recommendation	80.60%	19.40%	100.00%
	% within received any training	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	% of Total	80.60%	19.40%	100.00%

The results of the cross tabulation between whether respondents would recommend garlic-based bio-pesticides to other farmers and whether they had received training or information on preparing or using these bio pesticides revealed that a large majority (94.2%) of respondents indicated they would recommend the use of garlic-based bio pesticides. Among them, 116 (74.8% of total) had not received any training, while 30 (19.4%) had received training. Notably, all respondents who had received training were willing to recommend the bio pesticides, while those who did not recommend them (5.8% of total) had not received any training. The Chi-Square test indicated no statistically significant association between training and willingness to recommend (Pearson Chi-Square = 2.293, df = 1, p = 0.130), although the likelihood ratio was marginally significant at p = 0.045. This suggests a potential positive influence of training on recommendation behaviour, although the association was not strong enough to be conclusive at the conventional 0.05 significance level.

Perceptions and Statistical Analysis of the Effectiveness of Garlic-Based Bio pesticides

Table 6: Training Coverage and Perceptions of Garlic-Based Bio pesticides Effectiveness

District	% and Count	No	Yes	Total
Bubi	**Count**	**55**	**2**	**57**
	% within district	96.50%	3.50%	100.00%
	% within received training	44.00%	6.70%	36.80%
	% of Total	35.50%	1.30%	36.80%
Hwange	**Count**	**70**	**28**	**98**
	% within district	71.40%	28.60%	100.00%
	% within received training	56.00%	93.30%	63.20%
	% of Total	45.20%	18.10%	63.20%
Total	**Count**	**125**	**30**	**155**
	% within district	80.60%	19.40%	100.00%
	% within received training	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	% of Total	**80.60%**	**19.40%**	**100.00%**

The data reveals significant variation in the receipt of training on garlic-based bio pesticides across different districts and sites. In Bubi, the majority (96.5%) of respondents have not received training, while only 3.5%

have. Conversely, Hwange shows a higher proportion of trained individuals (28.6%) compared to those who have not received training (71.4%). Across both sites, 80.6% of respondents have not received training, and 19.4% have. The Pearson Chi-Square and Fisher's Exact tests both show statistically significant results (p-value = 0.000), indicating a notable difference between the two sites in terms of access to training. Additionally, an analysis of three districts, Chentali, Lukhosi, and Pollard—reveals significant disparities in training coverage. In Chentali, 18.9% received training, while 81.1% did not; Lukhosi had 34.4% trained and 65.6% untrained; and Pollard had the lowest coverage, with only 3.5% trained. Lukhosi accounted for the largest proportion of trained respondents (70.0%), followed by Chentali (23.3%) and Pollard (6.7%). The Pearson Chi-Square test for these districts also showed statistically significant results (p-value = 0.000). These findings suggest that targeted outreach and education efforts are needed in areas with lower training coverage, especially Pollard, to address the disparities in access to garlic-based bio pesticide training.

Perceptions of Garlic-Based Bio-pesticides Effectiveness in Tomato Pest Control

Table 7 : Effectiveness of Garlic-Based Bio-pesticides in Tomato Production and Pest Control

Parameter Estimates	Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	Df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Do you believe garlic based bio pesticides are effective?							
Strongly Agree	1.179	0.572	4.253	1	0.039	0.059	2.3
Agree	7.611	0.897	71.938	1	0	5.852	9.37
Neutral	8.887	0.985	81.384	1	0	6.956	10.817
How would you rate the overall effectiveness of garlic?							
Highly effective	4.786	0.818	34.196	1	0	3.182	6.39
Moderately effective	6.468	0.991	42.567	1	0	4.525	8.411
Slightly effective	7.67	1.412	29.524	1	0	4.903	10.437
Very effective	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

The analysis explored perceptions of the effectiveness of garlic-based bio pesticides in controlling pests, particularly in tomato production and against sap-sucking pests such as aphids and whiteflies. A majority of respondents (80.0%) agreed that garlic-based bio pesticides are effective in tomato production, while 10.3% strongly agreed, 6.5% were neutral, and 3.2% strongly disagreed. When rating the effectiveness of garlic against sap-sucking pests, 69.7% considered it highly effective, 17.4% moderately effective, 11.0% very effective, and only 1.9% rated it as slightly effective. The ordinal logistic regression model was statistically significant (Chi-Square = 68.694, df = 3, $p < .001$), indicating that the model with predictors fits significantly better than the intercept-only model. Goodness-of-fit tests (Pearson Chi-Square = 14.864, p = .021; Deviance = 16.376, p = .012) suggest the model is a good fit for the data. Parameter estimates further support that perceptions of garlic's effectiveness significantly influence beliefs about its usefulness in tomato pest control. Specifically, those who rated garlic as highly or moderately effective were significantly more likely to agree or strongly agree with its overall effectiveness, with all related p-values being < .001. These findings underscore a strong and statistically significant positive perception of garlic-based bio pesticides among the respondents.

ISSN No. 2454-6194 | DOI: 10.51584/IJRIAS |Volume X Issue VI June 2025

DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics and Farming Experience

The predominantly middle-aged and older farming population in the sample, with a mean age of 50.84 years (SD = 10.51), is consistent with global patterns of aging agricultural workforces, especially in rural areas of Africa. Recent studies, such as by Kamara et al. (2023), indicate that aging farmer populations face challenges in adopting modern agricultural technologies, including bio pesticides, due to limited access to training and declining physical capacity for labour-intensive farming activities. This aligns with the findings of Ncube et al. (2022), who note that, despite years of experience, older farmers may still hesitate to adopt new technologies without proper exposure to their benefits and practical applications.

Educational Attainment and Perceived Effectiveness of Garlic-Based Bio-pesticides

The significant association between educational level and the perceived effectiveness of garlic-based bio pesticides ($\chi^2 = 59.076$, $p < 0.001$) underscores the role of education in shaping farmers' perceptions and adoption of new agricultural technologies. Recent research by Oladele et al. (2023) confirms that farmers with higher levels of education are more likely to trust scientifically validated pest management strategies, often favoring synthetic pesticides over organic alternatives. However, the findings that tertiary-educated individuals expressed greater skepticism about the effectiveness of garlic-based bio pesticides align with findings from Birkhauser et al. (2021), who argue that higher education can lead to a preference for modern and commercialized agricultural solutions.

Conversely, those with no formal education demonstrated stronger belief in the efficacy of garlic-based bio pesticides, which corresponds with studies such as that of Adebayo et al. (2021), who found that low-literacy farmers were more inclined to rely on traditional and locally sourced pest management practices.

Gender and Frequency of Biopesticide Use

The lack of a significant relationship between gender and bio pesticide usage frequency ($\chi^2 = 0.479$, $p = 0.787$) contrasts with several studies suggesting that gender-based disparities do exist in technology adoption, particularly in resource-constrained settings (Kassie et al., 2021). However, recent findings by Adu et al. (2023) emphasize that when training is equally accessible, gender does not significantly impact the use of bio pesticides. This may suggest that other factors, such as access to extension services or economic constraints, play a more crucial role than gender alone in determining bio pesticide use patterns.

Awareness and Usage of Garlic-Based Bio pesticides

Despite a high level of awareness of garlic-based bio pesticides (94.2%), the lack of a significant correlation between awareness and usage frequency ($\chi^2 = 0.751$, $p = 0.687$) suggests that awareness alone does not necessarily translate into regular use. This finding is supported by recent studies, such as that by Qaim et al. (2022), who argue that knowledge dissemination is insufficient without accompanying support mechanisms like training and practical demonstrations. Additionally, informal knowledge transmission, as indicated by a small percentage of "unaware" farmers still using garlic-based solutions, is a common phenomenon in rural areas, where word-of-mouth and communal learning often drive agricultural practices (Meyer et al., 2022).

Training and Recommendation Behaviour

The clear influence of training on the likelihood of recommending garlic-based bio pesticides highlights the importance of capacity-building in agricultural technology adoption. A statistically significant finding, albeit marginal ($p = 0.130$ for Chi-Square, $p = 0.045$ for Likelihood Ratio), reflects the growing body of research supporting the idea that structured training significantly enhances farmers' ability to evaluate and advocate for agro ecological practices. A study by Tufan et al. (2022) supports this, showing that well-designed training programs increase farmers' confidence in non-synthetic pest management solutions, leading to increased advocacy and dissemination of these practices.

Geographic Disparities in Training Access

The significant geographic differences in training access ($p < 0.001$), especially in under-served districts like Pollard, echo recent findings by Garcia et al. (2023), who highlighted the critical importance of equitable service delivery in agricultural extension programs. Geographic disparities in training can significantly hinder the adoption of bio pesticides, as some areas may lack the infrastructure or access to extension services. This finding calls for a targeted approach to agricultural training, focusing on regions with low adoption rates, which can help reduce these inequities and enhance the overall success of bio pesticide interventions (Sacco et al., 2022).

Perceptions of Garlic-Based Bio pesticides for Pest Control in Tomato Production

The findings from this analysis align with previous studies that have explored the effectiveness of bio pesticides in sustainable agriculture. Garlic-based bio pesticides have been widely recognized for their potential in pest management, particularly in organic farming systems (Rajendran et al., 2021). Garlic's strong natural properties, including allicin, make it effective against a wide range of pests, including aphids and whiteflies, which are common in tomato production (Wang et al., 2019). These pests are known to damage plants by feeding on the sap, and garlic's role in repelling or killing these pests has been supported by numerous studies on its bioactive compounds (Hussain et al., 2020).

The high percentage (80.0%) of respondents who agreed that garlic-based bio pesticides are effective in tomato production is consistent with findings from other agricultural studies that emphasize the effectiveness of plant-based bio pesticides as alternatives to chemical pesticides (Jensen et al., 2018). The perception that garlic is particularly effective against sap-sucking pests is also supported by recent studies, which have demonstrated that garlic extracts significantly reduce pest populations in tomato crops (Chaudhary et al., 2020).

The statistical analysis, including the ordinal logistic regression model, underscores that perceptions of garlic's effectiveness are highly significant in shaping farmers' willingness to use it as a bio pesticide. This aligns with behavioral theories suggesting that farmers' attitudes towards pest control methods, informed by effectiveness beliefs, are crucial for adoption (Beyene et al., 2020). The goodness-of-fit tests confirm that the model used in this study adequately represents the relationship between perception and the likelihood of garlic-based bio pesticide adoption, reinforcing the reliability of the findings.

These results not only highlight the general positive perception of garlic-based bio pesticides among respondents but also indicate that their beliefs are aligned with recent literature that supports the viability of garlic in sustainable pest management. Further research could explore the long-term impact of garlic-based bio pesticides on crop yield and sustainability in different agro ecological zones.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our study highlights the potential of garlic-based bio pesticides in enhancing sustainable agricultural practices in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe. By understanding farmer knowledge, perceptions, and practices, we can design targeted interventions to promote the adoption of bio pesticides, ultimately contributing to improved crop yields, reduced environmental degradation, and enhanced livelihoods for smallholder farmers. Future research should focus on the long-term efficacy of garlic-based bio pesticides and their potential integration into existing agricultural systems. Policymakers and agricultural extension services can use our findings to develop strategies promoting sustainable agriculture practices in the region.

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