

The African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics (AfJARE)

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A special collection of papers on environmental and resource economics topics presented at the Inaugural Conference of the African Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (2-4 August 2021)

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The special issue focused on topics in environmental and resource economics that originated from the inaugural conference of the African Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (AFAERE), held on 2-4 August 2021. The conference (<https://afaere.org/inaugural-conference/>) was held virtually at the peak of the global health pandemic of Covid-19 in 2021. It attracted scholars and keynote speakers from across the globe.

The inaugural conference of AFAERE covered the following themes over the three days: Climate variability, impact and adaptation; Agriculture and agricultural productivity; Institutions and Policy; Environmental Valuation and Behavioural Economics; Municipal Services; Natural Resource Management and Conservation; Energy and Regional Economic Growth; Food and Water Security and Agricultural Risk; Health and Human Capital; Investment, Research and Scholarships. The main aim of this special issue is to showcase and highlight the environmental and resource economics component of the journal, as presented by the six papers in this special issue of AfJARE.

The six papers selected for the special issue covered the following topics: technology adoption in Zambia, access and willingness to pay for water in Uganda, the role of wildlife in climate change adaptation in South Africa, experiment on the impact of a scholarship programme on social capital formation in South Africa, climate variability and agricultural productivity in Uganda, and the last study looked at the influence of farmers' perceptions of climate change effects in Nigeria.

The first paper by Maseko and others examines the impact of the adoption of residue retention on households' maize yield in northern Zambia, using the propensity score

matching (PSM) method. The paper by Ssebagala and Karuaihe analysed the willingness to pay (WTP) for water through the value households attach to accessing private water supply services at their premises, using the contingent valuation method. The study by Otieno and others, combined a sample of wildlife and livestock ranches, to estimate a multinomial choice model of various ranching options, which shows that mixed wildlife-livestock ranches are less vulnerable to climate change compared to others.

The paper by Chikwalila and others used experiments to test whether the MasterCard Foundation (MCF) scholarship programme causally influences the creation of cognitive social capital among University of Pretoria recipients. The study by Babyenda and others investigated the effect of climate variability on agricultural productivity in Uganda, using panel data econometric methods. The last paper Onoja investigated the influence of farmers' perceptions of climate change effects and their household characteristics on the choice of adaptation technologies they adopt, using the Heckman model.

All the five papers, except the one on scholarships, addressed topics on technology adoption, climate change, consumer preferences and issues of access to resources, including water, land for wildlife and farming. All these topics are relevant for policy guidance on the management and allocation of environmental and natural resources. Furthermore, all these studies used the relevant models for environmental and resource economics, such as impact evaluation (PSM), non-market valuation techniques (CVM and choice modeling), panel data and limited dependent variable models. The paper by Chikwalila adds a special touch of experimental and behavioural economics, which are some of the models to help policy makers, including education funders like MCF, to appreciate the role of cognitive social capital, which is based on commonly shared norms among subjects, leading to honest and cooperative behaviour.

This is the first initiative towards long term collaboration between the African Association of Agricultural Economists (AAAE) and the African Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (AFAERE), for the two associations to ensure that issues of both fields are reflected and presented in this journal. This special issue also came at the time when the global community of environmental and resource

economists lost one of the greatest economist and founding editor, Prof. Rashid Hassan in June 2023.

Acknowledgments

As special issue guest editors, we want to thank the contributors to AFAERE's inaugural conference that led to the special issue papers as well as all the reviewers involved. We are grateful to the constructive support and feedback from the different reviewers and members of AFAERE community who provided feedback over several cycles of review. This initiative would not have taken place without the support of the Council of AFAERE, with specific reference to Professors Margaret Chitiga-Mabugu and Professor Wisdom Akpalu who served as the Review Committee. Another word of thanks goes to the Chief Editor, Dr. Joshua Ariga and Co-editor, Dr. Suresh Babu for their initiation of this collaboration. We believe this special issue is a step towards building a strong collaboration between AFAERE and the journal, to highlight issues on environmental and natural resource management to guide policy initiatives in Africa, as a resource based continent.