ABSTRACT
This study had the purpose to investigate the contribution of farm cooperatives on members’ food security and income, to assess the difference between farm cooperative members and non-cooperative members and identify various challenges that farm cooperatives do confront. The study covered two farm cooperatives CORIBARU and CORIKI and some non-cooperative members. From each cooperative, a sample of 30% has been randomly taken and the same number of respondents has as well been randomly interviewed from the non-cooperative members of the neighbouring households. Briefly, the sample for this study included 170 persons from CORIKI, 280 persons from CORIBARU and 450 persons from the non-cooperative members’ group. Data have been collected by both interviews and observation methods. Answers have been presented in either MS excel tables or graphs and discussed in details in chapter 4. Respondents revealed that cooperative members are better-off than non-cooperative members both in terms of food security and income status. An important percentage (53.8%) of non-cooperative members reported to belong in the lower annual income category (10.000frw – 50.000frw) whereas only 6.8% and 20% from respectively CORIBARU and CORIKI belong to this lower income category. The study has also shown that farm cooperatives have contributed to improving on members’ households’ food security and income. In CORIBARU, only 51.8% of respondents could access to 3 meals a day before joining the cooperative whereas 83.6% have currently accessed 3 meals/day after having joined the cooperative. In CORIKI, only 24.1% could access to 3 meals/day before joining the cooperative whereas 42.4% has currently accessed to that. 23% of respondents from CORIBARU reported to have had the annual income range of 100.000Rfr – 200.000RFR before cooperative formation and this percentage increased to 40% for the same income range after cooperative formation. In CORIKI, the increase of people in the income range of 100.000Rfr – 200.000 Rfr from 8.2% (before cooperative) to 24.1% (after cooperative) shows the contribution of the cooperative on annual income. Farm cooperative challenges have been identified: poor cooperative management by the committees, difficult access to agricultural inputs, poor infrastructure maintenance and lack of post-harvest infrastructure. Recommendations have been given to the government of Rwanda, non-governmental partners, cooperatives and researchers, all to strengthen farm cooperatives for the betterment of members’ food security and income and to encourage non-farm cooperative members to join cooperatives.