

Effects of Low and Medium Microwave Radiation on Germination of Bean and Maize Seedlings

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Abstract: Microwave radiation effects depend on radiation frequency and exposure period. Generally, low microwave exposure has been successfully used as a positive effect on the accelerating seed germination, while a long exposure usually tends to reduce plant growth. Microwave irradiation could affect plant growth, development and seed germination. The objective of the study is to examine the effects of microwave radiation (low and medium) on seed germination of bean and maize. Various germination traits were estimated and monitored during the experiment at different time-points; 4, 7, and 10 days after sowing (DAS). Seeds of Maize and Bean were divided into two, each group containing three replicas of maize and bean seeds. The first group represents the untreated (unexposed) control and second group was irradiated with different exposure periods to microwave Panasonic® NN-N740 (Low and Medium for 1, 2, 3 and 4 minutes for both maize and beans). The length of maize and bean seeds increased during the trials germination days (5,7 and 10) compare to length recorded for control for exposed low and medium microwave radiation at time interval of 1, 2, 3 and 4 minutes respectively. The microwave radiation used in the present study promoted grains germination, accelerated seedling development and growth. The results obtained from this experiment emphasized the necessity of exposing maize and bean seeds to lowest time of microwave before sowing in seed beds to promote a high germinate and to produce uniform seedlings. The effects of different treatments were found to be stimulating the germination and seedling vigour of plants especially in power and exposure time treatments.

Keywords: Microwave Radiation, Low, Medium, Germination, Maize, Beans

1. INTRODUCTION

Corn is farmed throughout Latin America and is a key staple in Central America, along with beans. The FAO has identified a gap in production areas in this region, as well as a need that must be addressed: increasing maize production, which requires significant effort but is one of the few crops with commercial seed production (Layne- Garsaball *et al.*, 2007).

The growing demand for organic products, combined with an increase in plant materials for food production, has prompted scientists to look for systemic factors to boost output, taking into account not only traditional methods of crop development, such as the use of fertilizers and agrochemicals, which can cause environmental damage to some extent, but also physical methods, such as the use of lasers (Hernandez *et al.*, 2009; Dominguez *et al.*, 2010).

Physical treatment techniques are one of the safest popular methods for improving seed germination and plant growth, thanks to their low environmental impact. Physical elements have also been used to achieve a good biological change in plants without having an impact on the ecosystem (Govindaraj *et al.*, 2017). Electromagnetic waves, including as ultraviolet and microwave radiation, ultrasound, laser, and ionizing radiation, are among the physical elements now used for seed treatments. Microwave and UV-radiation, in particular, are thought to be the most essential physical therapies for pre-sowing seed treatments (Araujo *et al.*, 2016). Microwaves (MWs) are a non-ionizing electromagnetic with a high-frequency range of 300 MHz to GHz and a wavelength range of 1m to 1mm (Wang *et al.*, 2018). Microwaves are a type of electromagnetic radiation with frequencies ranging from 300 MHz to 300 GHz. They work through absorption on a molecular level, resulting in vibration energy or heat, as well as biological impacts (Pakhomov *et al.*, 1998). Microwaves may have long-term health impacts, according to relevant study (Lin, 2004). Because there is no clear mechanism for the impact of microwave radio-frequencies on biological systems, the identification, evaluation, and assessment of microwave bio-effects has been difficult and contentious. In biophysical and engineering sciences, there has been a persistent belief that microwave fields are incapable of inducing bio-effects other than through heating (Banik *et al.*, 2003).

The effects of microwave radiation are dependent on the frequency and duration of exposure. Low microwave exposure has been shown to have a good effect on seed germination; however a protracted exposure reduces plant growth. Several authors recently observed that microwave has a good effect on barley seed germination at short microwave exposure times, but that longer exposure times had a negative effect on seed germination (Abu-Elsaoud & Qari, 2017; Kretova et al., 2018). In addition, studies by Amirnia (2014), Abu-Elsaoud (2015), Jakubowski (2015), and Mohsenkhan *et al.* (2018) found that MW can be utilized to promote seed germination in pepper, wheat, maize, bean, soybean, and lentil, respectively.

Abu-Elsaoud (2015) found that microwave irradiation has an effect on plant growth, development, and seed germination. Low-intensity microwave was shown to have no effect on plant growth and development, whereas higher microwave irradiation doses reduced and retarded seed germination (Oprica, 2008). Ponomarev *et al.* (1996) investigated the direct effects of microwave on cereal germination, using a wavelength of 1 cm and an irradiation exposure dose of up to 40 minutes on barley, oats, and wheat seeds, with the best results after 20 minutes of microwave exposure (Ponomarev et al., 1996). Radzevicius et al. (2013) found that irradiating vegetable seeds with high-power microwave radiation stimulated many germination and growth rate parameters.

Aladjadjiyan (2002) investigated the influence of microwave irradiation with varying powers on various seed germination consequences of four different ornamental crop species, finding a rise in various germination consequences. Abu-Elsaoud (2015) supported a dose-dependent putative stimulating impact of microwave on growth and germination by comparing the effect of microwave radiations on germination and growth of six distinct Egyptian genotypes using varied exposure times. Crețescu *et al.* (2013) investigated the effect of microwave radiations of 2.45 GHz on the chlorophyll contents of four barley genotypes after exposure to 0, 10, and 20 seconds. The results revealed a dose-dependent change in chlorophyll contents, ranging from lower chlorophyll in sensitive genotypes to higher chlorophyll in tolerant genotypes (Crețescu *et al.*, 2013). Microwave irradiation causes resonance events in biological systems and stimulates living organisms (Aladjadjiyan, 2002).

The majority of studies on the biological impacts of phone masts and microwave radiofrequencies on animal and human health were centered on possible biological effects from phone masts and microwave radiofrequencies (Balmori, 2009). The biochemical mechanism by which microwave radiations affect living organisms' biological systems is not entirely understood, and it may vary depending on the amplitude, frequency, and irradiation duty cycle (Aladjadjiyan, 2010; Abu-Elsaoud, 2015; Williams, 2016).

Microwaves (300 MHz to 300 GHz) have been shown to cause changes in cell membrane permeability and cell growth rate, as well as interference with ions and organic compounds such as proteins (Eugen Ungureanu *et al.*, 2009). Plants are crucial components of a healthy ecosystem and play an important part in the living world as primary providers of food and oxygen; consequently, it would be helpful to research their interaction with today's enhanced radio and microwave frequency fields.

Light, moisture, temperature, and other environmental factors that influence plant growth have been well documented, and research papers based on these investigations are widely available. Plants are acceptable environmental signals, and studies on plants are less emotionally distressing than human or animal studies (Verdus *et al.*, 1997; Vian *et al.*, 1999). Microwave bioeffects research is a new and exciting field of science that involves both biotechnology and microwave engineering.

Microwave bio-effects can be divided into two types: thermal and non-thermal. Microwave fields have been shown to cause harmful biological effects at high power levels. Bio-effects at low power levels, on the other hand, are yet to be thoroughly understood. Radiation is known to cause physiological and genetic changes, such as the development of numerous epidermal meristems in the hypocotyl, changes in the proteome, and so on (Tafforeau *et al.*, 2004; Tafforeau *et al.*, 2006).

Seed germination, shoot development, plant length, fresh weight, fruit yield, and mean fruit weight are all known to be positively influenced by the application of extremely low frequency magnetic fields today (Cakmak *et al.*, 2010). Protein biosynthesis, cell production, photochemical activity, respiration rate, enzyme activity, and nucleic acid content have all been demonstrated to benefit from magnetic fields (Stange *et al.*, 2002).

Natural aging has been seen in maize and beans, resulting in a reduction in the physiological potential of seeds, which reduces germination capacity, early seedling growth rate, and tolerance to adverse environments (Gutierrez-Hernandez *et al.*, 2007). However, because the action of electromagnetic fields on seeds can affect the course of several physiological processes and drive plant development (Podlenny *et al.*, 2005), it can greatly reverse this phenomenon.

Few, if any, empirical investigations have been conducted in Nigeria to indicate that microwave radiation has a good influence on seed germination (Hu *et al.*, 1996 and Chen *et al.*, 2005). Regardless of the data on the effect of microwaves on plants that has been gathered, little is known about whether microwave pretreatment of seeds causes a change in the inner energy of seeds, stimulating enzyme activities, improving metabolism, and increasing the intensity of biophoton emission, which is used as a measure of cell

metabolism. As a result, we attempted to evaluate the influence of a microwave on maize and bean seed germination in the current study.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Materials

Seed samples, Sample container, Petri plates, Beaker, Microwave, Frequency meter, Microwave power meter, Microwave absorber; Microwave, Microwave power meter, Microwave absorber; Microwave, Microwave power meter, Microwave absorber; Microwave, Microwave power meter, Microwave absorber Electronic balance, stop watch, thread, scale, seed germination chamber, permanent marker, zip-lock plastic baggies, water dropper, and petri plates were among the other items used in the experiment.

2.2 Collection of Seeds sample

The maize and bean seeds were purchased at the Esa-Oke market and transported to the Osun State College of Technology's Environmental Biology Laboratory in Esa Oke in plastic bags..

2.3 Exposure of seeds to microwave radiation

Maize and bean seeds were divided into two groups, with three replicas of maize and bean seeds in each group. The untreated (unexposed) control group was irradiated with varied microwave Panasonic® NN-N740 exposure times, whereas the second group was irradiated with varying microwave Panasonic® NN-N740 exposure periods (Low and Medium for 1, 2, 3 and 4 minutes for both maize and beans).

2.4 Experimental Design for Sowing of Maize and Beans

The soil used for sowing seeds was collected from an experimental plot at the Department and was employed in a pot experiment. Test crop seeds were individually planted in pots containing 300 g soil after being exposed to microwave radiation for 1, 2, 3, and 4 minutes. All pots were put on a screen house bench with a fully randomized design (three replicates per treatment) and were watered on a regular basis to ensure enough moisture.

2.5 Effect of microwave radiations on germination

During the experiment, distinct germination features were assessed and observed at three time points: 4, 7, and 10 days after sowing

2.5 Statistical Analysis

Data was subjected to software program of SPSS version 17 for statistical analysis.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Germination of Mize Seeds Exposed to Low Frequency of Microwave Radiation

Effects of low microwave radiation on germination of maize seedlings at days interval was shown in figure 1 below. Control was not expose to microwave radiation while other maize seeds were exposed to microwave at low frequency with time interval of 1, 2, 3 and 4 minutes respectively (Figure 1).

At Day 4, all maize seeds exposed to low microwave radiation had increased length of germination (7 and 6 cm) compare to value recorded in control (5cm) except maize exposed to low microwave radiation for period of a minute and 4 minutes respectively (Figure 1). The maize exposed to radiation for a minute had equal length of germination with the control while the length recorded after 4 minutes of low radiation exposure had growth length lower (4cm) than control (5 cm).

Maize seed exposed to low frequency of microwave radiation for a minute had highest length of germination (14.5cm) at day 7 of growth. This was preceded by growth length of 14 cm and 13.5 cm observed for Maize seeds exposed to microwave radiation at time interval of 3 and 2 minutes respectively (Figure 1). Only maize seed exposed to low frequency of radiation for 4 minutes had low germination length (11 cm) compare to 12cm recorded in the control at day 7 (Figure 1).

At day 10, maize seeds exposed to low radiation at 1, 2, 3 had increase length of germination (28, 27 and 27 cm) compare to length of 25 cm observed in control. The highest germination length (28 cm) was obtained at exposure period of a minute (Figure 4.1). The maize seed exposed at period of 4 minutes of low frequency of microwave radiation had similar germination length equal with length recorded for control (Figure 4.1).

The effect of microwave radiation in boosting rapid germination and development rate is revealed in this study by exposing or treating maize seedlings with microwave radiation. Throughout the investigated germination days of growth, low frequency microwave radiation was beneficial in promoting quick germination of maize seeds, particularly at exposure times of 4 minutes. Rajagopal (2009) demonstrated that microwave frequency aided the germination rate and growth indices in wheat, barley, and rye

in a similar study. This could be related to microwave frequency's beneficial impact on water absorption and other metabolic processes (Nelson, 1987).

Gaurilikiene *et al.* (2013) also found that exposing wheat seeds to a strong microwave electric field at 2.6 GHz for 20 minutes enhanced grain production. Low microwave frequency also promoted plant growth, however high microwave frequencies had little or no influence on plant growth (Murakarmi *et al.*, 2001).

Furthermore, low-power microwave radiation (1 KHz) was found to have a stimulating effect on seed germination and seedling vigour in wheat, Bengal gram, green gram, and moth bean (Ragha *et al.*, 2011). This can also be linked to the submissions of Baskin and Baskin (2001) and Basra (2006), who said that the germination stage in plants generally demands a higher amount of warmth than the other growth phases. This could be another good reason to boost the germination rate of maize that has been planted.

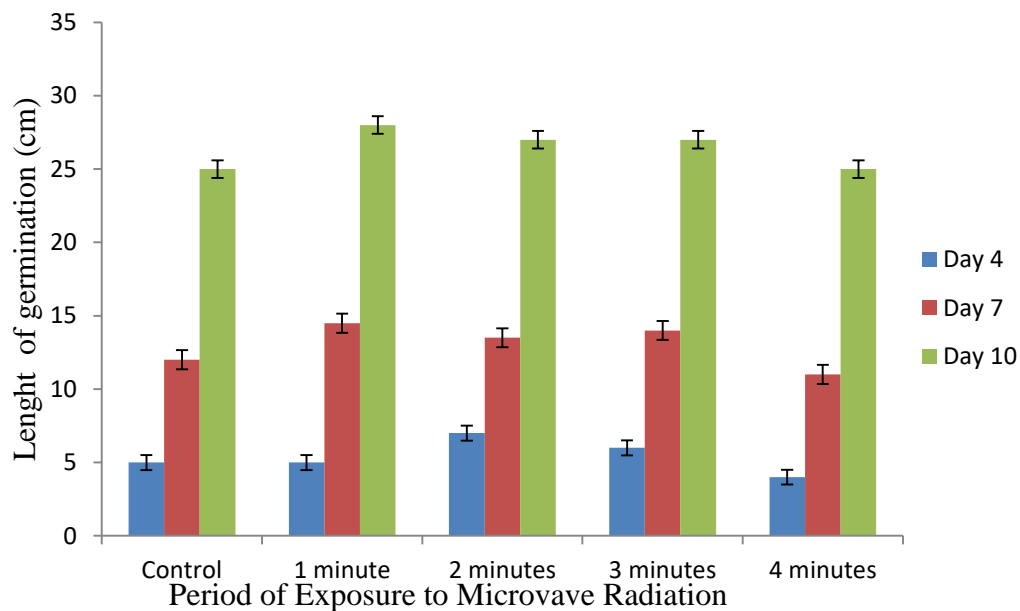


Figure 1: Shows the germination length of maize seeds within period of 10 days after exposure to low frequency of microwave radiation at time interval of 1, 2, 3 and 4 minutes.

3.2 Germination of Mize Seeds Exposed to Medium Frequency of Microwave Radiation

Germination length of maize seeds within period of 10 days after exposure to medium frequency of microwave radiation at time interval of 1, 2, 3 and 4 minutes was shown in figure 2 below. Control was not exposed to microwave while other maize seeds were exposed to microwave at medium frequency at time interval of 1, 2, 3 and 4 minutes respectively.

The effects of microwave was observed in all seeds planted (7, 6, 11 and 7 cm) at microwave exposure of 1, 2, 3 and 4 minutes respectively (Figure 2). Maize exposed to medium microwave for 3 minutes had highest length of growth (11 cm) compare to values of 5 observed in control after day 4 of germination. This reveals that microwave exposure aids growth of maize (Figure 2).

At Day 7, the length of growth obtained for control was 12 cm. All maize seeds exposed to microwave treatment recorded improve length of germination (13, 17, and 14 cm at 1, 3 and 4 minutes of exposure) except maize seed (12 cm) exposed to microwave for period of 2 minutes. The length obtained is equal to the germination length for control (Figure 2). The maize exposed to medium microwave for period of 3 minutes had highest germination length (17 cm) and this is preceded by germination length (14 cm) obtained for maize exposed to medium frequency of microwave at period of 4 minutes (Figure 2).

The highest germination length of 27 cm was obtained for maize seed exposed to medium frequency of microwave at period of 4 minutes after 10 day of germination. This was followed by maize (26 cm) exposed at period of 2 minutes (Figure 2). However, maize exposed to medium frequency of microwave at period of a minute had similar germination length (25 cm) with that of control while maize treated at period of 3 minutes had slight length of germination (25.5 cm) compare to control (Figure 2).

In this study, the medium frequency microwave radiation also showed an increase in maize length during germination. In comparison to the control, maize seeds exposed to above radiation for 3 and 4 minutes exhibit a quick development rate. This demonstrates the ability of microwave radiation to improve maize seed germination. The impact of microwave frequency in enhancing seed germination and shoot and root growth was demonstrated by this finding.

The findings of Nelson (1987), Tran (1979), and Vadivambal *et al.*, (2007), who found that microwave frequency radiation aided the GR and growth indices of *C. annuum*, were consistent. This could be related to microwave frequency's beneficial impact on water absorption and other metabolic processes (Nelson, 1987).

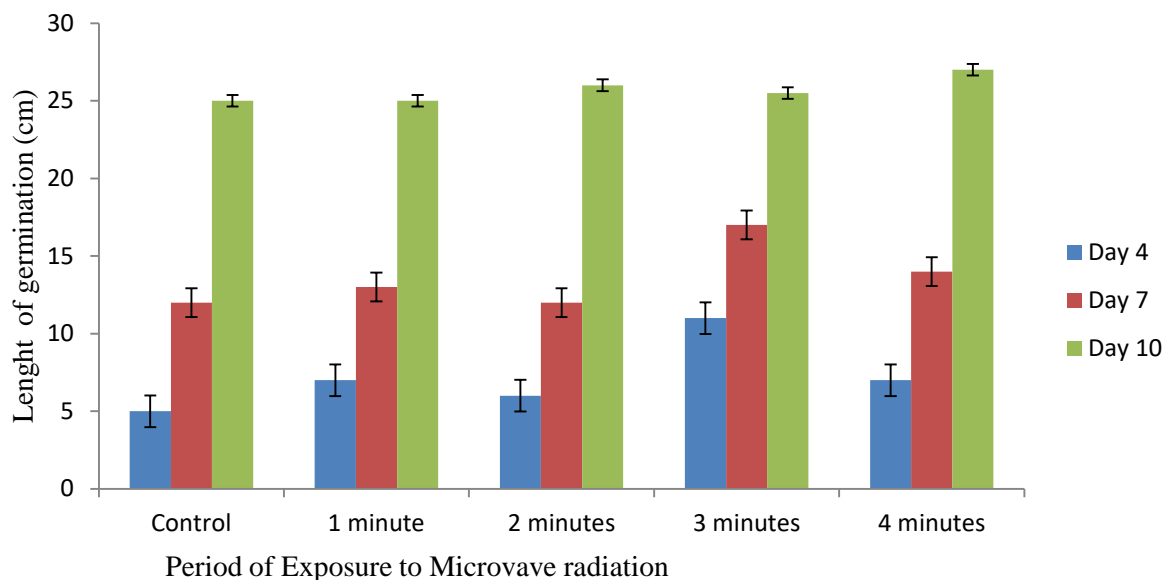


Figure 2: Shows the germination length of maize seeds within period of 10 days after exposure to medium frequency of microwave radiation at time interval of 1, 2, 3 and 4 minutes.

3.3 Germination of Bean Seeds Exposed to Low Frequency of Microwave Radiation

Effects of low microwave radiation on germination of bean seedlings at days interval was shown in figure 3 below. Other bean seeds were exposed to microwave at low frequency with time interval of 1, 2, 3 and 4 minutes but control was left unexposed to radiation (Figure 3).

Control had 13 cm length of germination after 4 days while all bean seeds exposed to microwave radiations had low and poor length of germination (3, 0, 3 and 8 cm at 1, 2, 3 and 4 minutes) after 4 days of germination (Figure 3). This implies that the low frequency of microwave radiation had no effect on bean seeds at all exposed time intervals after 4 days (Figure 3).

All bean seeds exposed to low frequency of microwave had low length of germination (13, 6, 8 and 17 cm) after day 7 of germination which is contrary to 18cm obtained as length of germination for control (Figure 3). Only bean seed exposed to low frequency of microwave at period of 4 minutes had increased length of germination (26 cm) compare to 23 cm recorded for control at day 10 of germination. Other bean seeds exposed to radiation at period of 1, 2 and 3 minutes had low germination length (19, 19 and 15 cm) (Figure 3).

At days 4 and 7, the germination rate of bean seeds exposed to low microwave radiation was stunted. When compared to the control, the values reported after one minute, two minutes, three minutes, and four minutes of exposure time are extremely low. After 10 days of germination, a similar instance was seen, with the exception of the exposure duration of 4 minutes, which had grown in length after day 10 when compared to the control length. This suggests that low microwave radiation is insufficient to promote quick germination of bean seeds, and that environmental factors may be involved.

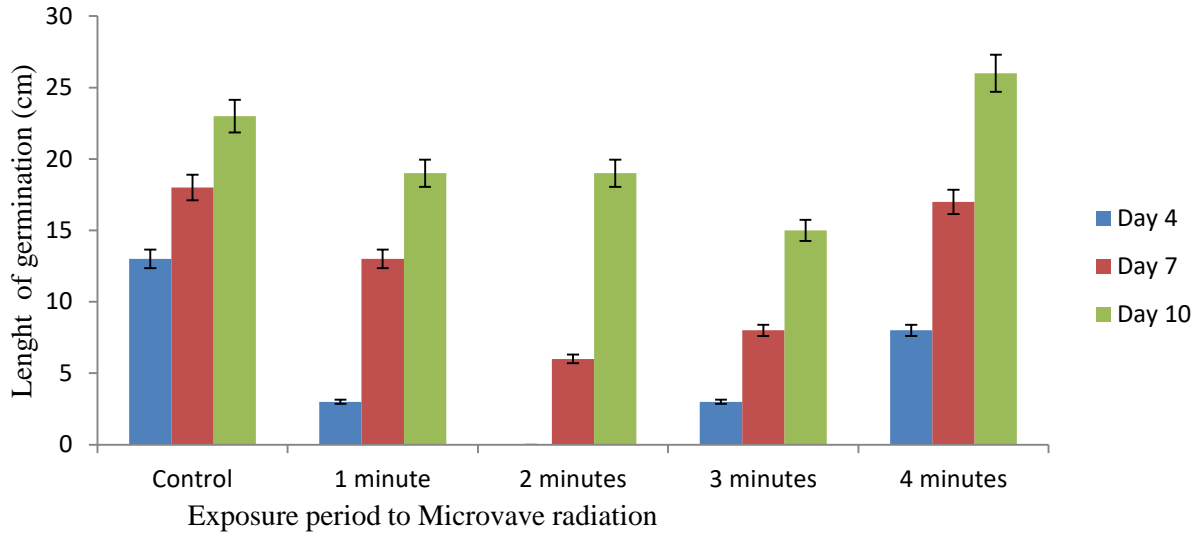


Figure 3: Shows the germination length of bean seeds within period of 10 days after exposure to low frequency of microwave radiation at time interval of 1, 2, 3 and 4 minutes

3.4 Germination of Bean Seeds Exposed to Medium Frequency of Microwave Radiation

Effects of medium microwave radiation on germination of bean seed seedlings at days interval was shown in figure 4. Apart from control other bean seeds were exposed to microwave at medium frequency with time interval of 1, 2, 3 and 4 minutes (Figure 4).

After day 4 of germination, control had length of 13 cm while the highest length of germination (18 cm) was observed in bean seeds exposed to radiation for 3 minutes and this was followed by values (15 cm) recorded for bean seeds exposed to microwave for 4 minutes (Figure 4). The values recorded for control is higher than those obtained (10 and 11 cm) after 1 and 2 minutes of exposure to medium microwave radiation (Figure 4).

Bean seeds exposed to radiation at period of 3 and 4 minutes had high lengths (24 and 20 cm) after day 7 of germinations compare to 18 cm recorded for control while bean seeds exposed to radiation for 2 minutes had similar length (18 cm) with control but length observed after a minute of microwave radiation is low after day 7 of germination (Figure 4).

All bean seeds exposed to radiation had high length of germination (23.5, 26, 30 and 25 cm) compare to values obtained for control (23 cm) after day 10 of germination (Figure 4). The highest length of germination (30cm) was recorded after bean seed was exposed to radiation after 3 minutes, next is 2 minutes exposure to microwave with length of 26 cm (Figure 4).

Throughout the trial days, the bean seedlings exposed to medium microwave radiation exhibited a higher germination rate. When evaluated at day 4, 7, and 10, those who were exposed for 3 and 4 minutes exhibited increased germination length. This suggests that exposing bean seeds to a microwave at a medium frequency will hasten germination. In a similar vein, Jakubowski (2010) found that microwave irradiating potato tuber variety Felka Bona for 10 seconds at a frequency of 2.45 GHz increased the weight and growth biomass in potato, whereas higher frequencies of 38, 46, and 54 GHz for 20 seconds had no effect on the weight of irradiated seed potato germs and potato tuber crop of variety Felka Bona

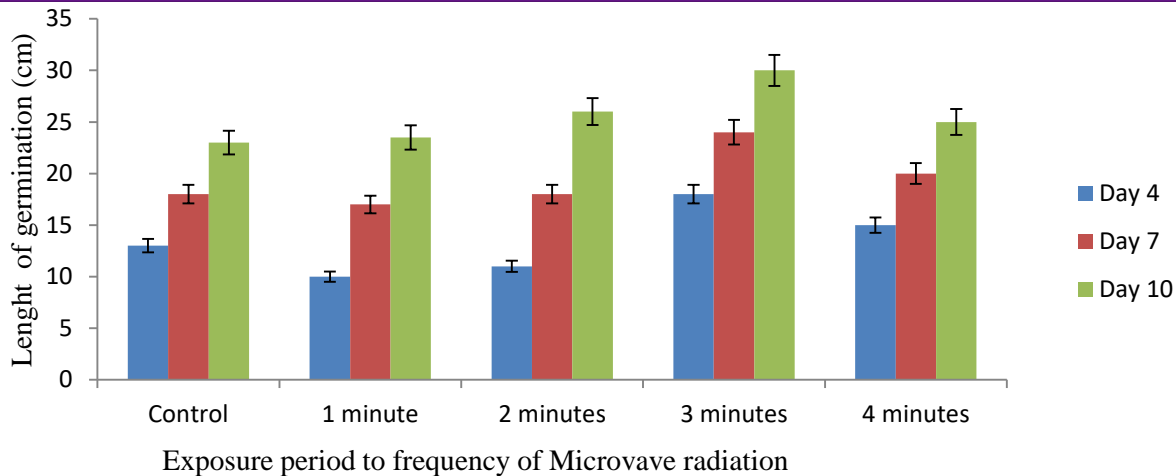


Figure 4: Shows the germination length of bean seeds within period of 10 days after exposure to medium frequency of microwave radiation at time interval of 1, 2, 3 and 4 minutes.

CONCLUSION

The microwave radiation utilized in this study increased seedling development and growth and enhanced grain germination. The findings of this experiment highlighted the need of exposing maize and bean seeds to the shortest amount of microwave time possible before sowing in seed beds to ensure a high percentage of seeds germinate and uniform seedlings. Different seed processing regimes were tested to see how they affected germination and growth rate. Plant germination and seedling vigour were found to be stimulated by the effects of various treatments, particularly in the power and exposure time treatments. Seed germination, seedling vigour, plant height, and bean seed samples using low microwave power and exposure time all show a decrease in trend as compared to control. When compared to control, medium frequency, on the other hand, stimulates seed germination in the majority of samples. In general, it was discovered that using a microwave has an influence on the revival of maize and bean seed germination at various doses. As a result, in addition to standard ways, it can be employed as a non-traditional mode of seed germination.

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