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Application of Mobile Learning in Agricultural Education: Case Study of Khuzestan, Iran

JAFAR YAGHOUBI¹, BAHMAN KHOSRAVIPOUR¹, NAHID FOROOSSHANI²

¹*Zanjan University, Agricultural Extension and Education, Iran*

²*Ramin Agricultural and Natural Resource University, Agricultural Extension and Education, Iran*

Abstract

Nowadays, rapid development of information and communication technologies leads to introducing new forms of communication and learning, including e-learning and mobile learning. Mobile learning and mobile tools as new phenomenon in rural communities have key potential capacity to present electronic services and training in agricultural sector. Considering this feature it is essential to understanding the advantages and disadvantages of mobile tools, feasibility and how to use these technologies in rural sector. The purpose of the study was assessing feasibility and applications of these technologies in agricultural education in Khuzestan Province, Iran. A descriptive correlation survey approach was used in this study. Responds filled in closed questions questionnaire. Reliability and validity of instrument were determined by investigating the attitudes of m-learning and extension specialists. The study population consists of managers and experts in Agricultural organization of Khuzestan province. A sample of 255 managers and experts was selected by using the stratified random sampling method. Results showed that respondents have positive perception to application of m-learning in agricultural education and e-services. The results also indicated that most important areas of the mobile tools applications for villagers are: Informed when making various educational courses, to send information about the climate zone, Send warnings to the prevalence of specific agricultural diseases, send information about different kinds of agricultural inputs, agricultural products price information, warning and information about natural disasters (flood, ...) in the region through SMS and MMS. Results also determined that attention to cultural situation before starting mobile learning and service for rural communities, development of mobile services telecommunications infrastructure, reducing costs to access information through various mobile tools for rural people and training courses about using mobile tools and related services are the main solutions for development of mobile e-government and learning in Khuzestan province. Based on factor analysis, five most highly ranked items on appropriate e-government services for rural sector were identified as: garden and crops, livestock, administrative and credit, marketing and foreign.

Keywords: Agriculture, farmers, m-learning, rural development