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Assessing Farmers’ readiness to embrace online social networks as educational tools: Base on TRI

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Abstract

The considerable potential of social media, particularly online social networks (OSNs), as educational tools and their growing efficacy in knowledge dissemination have been well established. These platforms possess significant capacity for training farmers and expanding their accessibility, particularly in third-world countries. Utilizing social media can substantially alleviate the persistent challenges associated with inadequate access to farmers in developing nations. However, it’s crucial to acknowledge the farmers’ capacity and readiness to utilise these social networks as educational tools. Hence, understanding the factors influencing the acceptance of these platforms for educational purposes becomes imperative. Addressing these factors can aid planners and policymakers in leveraging the potential of social networks to overcome challenges related to knowledge access, information dissemination, and extension training for farmers, thereby fostering agricultural development.

The present study was conducted to investigate the factors influencing the acceptance of social networks as a promotional educational tool among farmers in Khuzestan province, located in the southwest of Iran. Utilizing the descriptive method and the Technology Readiness Index (TRI) theory, 377 farmers from this province were selected through a simple random sampling method, and data were collected via a questionnaire. Results obtained from structural equation modelling using PLS software revealed that optimism and innovativeness had a positive and significant impact, while lack of comfort had a negative and significant effect on farmers’ intentions to use social networks for educational and promotional purposes. Collectively, these variables accounted for 49% of the variance in intention. Notably, the variable of insecurity did not exhibit a significant effect on intention.

Keywords: Intention, iran’s farmers, online social networks, technology readiness index (TRI)