

AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING INTERNET USE BY AGRICULTURAL OFFICERS AND EXPERTS: A CASE STUDY IN YAZD PROVINCE OF IRAN

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ABSTRACT

Information technology plays an important role in agricultural development. Application of this technology is one of the main strategies in the agricultural development policy framework in Iran. Accordingly, this study was conducted in Yazd province of Iran with the main objective of investigating the status of internet use by the agricultural officers and experts of the area. A survey method was adopted for the study and 153 people were selected as sample out of 971 agricultural officers and experts working throughout the province. A questionnaire was developed as the tool of study. The main scales of the questionnaire were found to be valid and reliable. The results showed that a majority of the respondents used internet at high extent. The respondents revealed that they use internet generally to find out new public and expert information on agriculture. According to the study there was significant relationship between internet use of the respondents and their age, attitude towards applying IT for agricultural development, educational level, working experience and some other variables. Step-wise regression analysis indicated that three variables, viz., skill to use internet, access to internet and attitude towards applying information technology (IT) for agricultural development totally accounted for 73 per cent of variation in the extent of internet use by the respondents. The findings revealed that five factors/components containing 25 variables determined about 78.53 per cent of variations of internet use for agricultural development: Positive attitude towards internet use, Enhancing professional competency to use internet, Organisational support to provide necessary prerequisites, Easy and reliable access to internet and Reduction of personal internet connection cost.