FACTORS AFFECTING THE ADOPTION OF E-MARKETING BY VEGETABLE FARMERS IN SRI LANKA

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E-marketing is an effective strategy that farmers can use to overcome the existing challenges in marketing their agricultural products. This approach was officially introduced to Sri Lanka in 2016 as part of the e-agricultural strategy. However, the use of e-marketing in the vegetable sector in Sri Lanka is currently low. Many factors influence the adoption of e-marketing. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the factors influencing the adoption of e-marketing by vegetable farmers in Sri Lanka. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 46 e-marketing adaptors and the snowball sampling method was used to select matched sample of 54 non-adaptors. Primary data were collected through a telephone survey using a structured and pre-tested questionnaire. Descriptive analytical techniques were used to summarize the data. Farmers who use e-marketing were divided into three groups based on their level of adoption for e-marketing: (1) <20%, (2) 20% to 40%, (3) >40%. Binary logistic regression was used to identify the factors influencing e-marketing adoption and ordinal logistic regression was used to identify the factors influencing higher levels of e-marketing adoption. Binary logistic regression revealed that the presence of social media membership, higher ICT proficiency, and a positive attitude toward the internet and computer networks increased ($p<0.05$) the likelihood of adopting e-marketing. In contrast, the farmer's age decreased ($p<0.05$) the likelihood of adoption. The ordinal logistic regression results revealed that farmers' risk-taking behaviour and the perceived usefulness of e-marketing have a significant ($p<0.05$) effect on the level of e-marketing adoption. It showed that the risk-taking farmers are more likely ($OR>1$) to have a higher level of adoption for e-marketing compared to risk-averse farmers. The major constraints for e-marketing are the lack of a regulatory mechanism and a sufficient and consistent customer base. The study emphasizes the importance of providing ICT training and using e-marketing platforms to increase farmer adoption for vegetable e-marketing.

Keywords: E-marketing adoption, ICT, Logistic regression, Vegetable farmers