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SMALLHOLDER'S READINESS TO ADOPT PLATFORMS LINKING LOCAL RESOURCE-SHARING IN EGYPT

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The agricultural sector in developing nations encounters numerous challenges, such as a decline in extension agents, restricted access to information, markets, and financial resources, along with inadequate skills and expertise [1]. Digital agricultural extension services offer a viable solution to break the cycle of low productivity, vulnerability, and poverty, particularly for smallholder farmers [2]. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified reliance on digital advisory services, especially in low-income regions where face-to-face agricultural counseling is limited. Digitization in agriculture has been driven by mobile phones, computers, and internet-based technologies. PRIMA RESILINK [3] plays a key role in strengthening smallholder farmers' resilience by enhancing market access and resource availability during crises. RESILINK's digital resource management platform connects farmers to alternative supply sources, resource-sharing opportunities, and distribution channels. While linking smallholders to markets is not new, RESILINK's "platform-of-platforms" approach integrates existing and emerging platforms into unified dashboards, reinforcing the ecosystem and encouraging long-term adoption. This study assesses smallholders' readiness to embrace digital platforms for resource-sharing in Egypt. A descriptive research approach was utilized to analyze the phenomenon, determine influencing factors, and generalize findings [4]. The study was conducted in Beni Suef Governorate, a key area for medicinal and aromatic plant cultivation. A random sample of 128 farmers, representing 10% of Tawa village's total agricultural population, was selected. To evaluate adoption willingness, this study examined determinants affecting the acceptance of RESILINK solutions using field data collected between January and April 2023 via structured personal interviews. The questionnaire was structured into six sections: farmers' personal and social details, resource-sharing options, ICT knowledge and information sources, readiness to adopt digital platforms, reasons for using agricultural digital tools, and challenges with digital technology. The final section explored farmers' experiences with agricultural crises and their perspectives on mitigating emergencies. Additionally, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted to provide deeper insights. This study offers key recommendations and presents contextual data to guide decision-making in the development and implementation of an online agricultural resource-sharing platform and we will present contextual data.

Keywords: Digital platforms, local resources-sharing, Small farmers

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