Piloting of the Concerns-based Adoption Model: Farmer Concerns About the Participatory Guarantee System in Cambodia

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Background and Need

While there is a large body of adoption and agricultural extension literature on the process of introducing a new technology, agricultural development projects are often expected to produce immediate results that do not always allow for the integration of these theories into practice.

The Concerns-based Adoption Model (CBAM) is a framework that places participants at the center of the change process to identify their concerns and challenges, providing a roadmap for projects to guide individuals with the correct support for their particular stage of adoption.

Findings

We assessed the potential for CBAM as a tool for agricultural development project management. We found that the adapted survey consistently placed farmers in the anticipated Stage of Concern. Identifying users’ Stage of Concern can inform program designers and practitioners, assisting in tailoring support across the adoption process. CBAM has the potential to inform participatory project design and give project administrators an evidence-based, systematic protocol for assessing the adoption process, adding another tool to the development practitioners’ toolbox.

Objectives and Methods

CBAM has typically been used for the introduction of new curriculum in formal education. But this study assessed the potential for CBAM to be applied to agriculture innovations. In this study, we adapted and piloted the CBAM “Stages of Concern” model to assess adoption of an agriculture innovation. The innovation is the Participatory Guarantee System for Cambodian vegetable farmers.

This research 1) tested the Concerns-based Adoption Model as an adoption method for guiding farmer adoption of food safety practices, 2) identified farmers’ Stages of Concern in their use of quality standards; and 3) identified the factors that influence adoption and the challenges faced by farmers in their adoption of new quality standards.

The Technology

Concerns-based Adoption Model

- The individual indicates little concern about the innovation or is unaware of it.
- The individual is generally aware of the innovation and is interested in learning about it. Interest is confined to the general characteristics, effects, and requirements.
- The individual is uncertain about the demands of the innovation and his/her ability to meet these demands. The individual is aware of the anticipated stressors and implications of the innovation on their personal situations.
- The individual focuses on the processes and task of using the innovation. Issues related to efficiency, organizing, managing, and successful implementing of the innovation dominate.
- The innovation focuses on their immediate sphere of influence.
- The individual focuses on coordinating and cooperating with others regarding one of the innovation.
- The individual focuses on exploring ways to reap more universal benefits from the innovation, including the possibility of making changes or replacing it with an alternative.

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