

Evaluation of ICT indices impacts on rural life based on AHP Method

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1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the traditional views that believed "information society" requires to pass through the various stages, especially transition from the industrial society, new perspectives argue that the emergence of new opportunities in the field of Information and Communication Technology has offered good options for all countries, especially for the less developed ones, and therefore the twentieth century industrial society quickly has been replaced with the information society of the twenty-first century. However, earlier authors like Toffler, had predicted "The Third Wave" of Technologies and advancing to new civilizations. In this regard, the effects of globalization can be studied in relation to new technologies of information and communication focusing on political, technological and cultural aspects. Today, the impact of ICT in all aspects of life, especially in rural communities at various levels has been fully recognized. This study seeks to investigate the factors affecting this process in rural areas and determine the importance of each of these factors.

2. TEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Currently, ICT has gained an outstanding importance in our life. Various studies have demonstrated the critical role of ICT in development of politics, economics and social culture. Information and communication technology has become a powerful tool for crossing the barriers of rural life. Castells is one of the researchers who explain information technology through the concepts of the information economy where the primary source of wealth creation lies in the power of creating new knowledge and its application in all areas of human activity through organizational and technical procedures of information processing. However, facilities that ICT provided for people to overcome the gap created by remoteness, show that there is a direct relationship between this technology and rural development. Generally speaking, ICT impacts on rural and remote areas are considered to be of two kinds: 1.the concept of how ICT has an impact on reducing the gaps; 2.by promoting the public knowledge of rural people to change them to trained ones. Evidence shows that the Internet fosters the social interactions and consequently increases the cohesion of the rural population and reduces out-migration.

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3. DISCUSSION

In this descriptive-analytic study, we tried to examine the areas that are affected by the ICT in rural areas, and then we tried to identify the weight and importance of each of them by selected experts of the research. For this purpose, the main indices of public knowledge, attitude, skill and activity were presented to experts in 12 sub-indices. To analyze the data and determine the weight of indices, AHP group model was used. Data analysis by AHP model showed that the index of consciousness with 0.571 gained the highest weight. This also happened for the sub-indices of consciousness. Among the selected indices, the index of attitude gained the least weights by the experts.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that today's information and communication technologies are so extensive that will affect all places. Rural areas are no exemption. This study using three indices of public knowledge, attitude, skill and activity as the indices affected by ICT, tried to examine this effect in rural areas and prioritize them by the help of some experts. The results revealed that the index of public knowledge had the first priority.

5. SUGGESTIONS

There commendations made as the result of this study are summarized in giving more attention to public knowledge in economic, socio-political issues and public awareness in rural areas in order to properly deal with the effects of ITC.

Key words: Rural ICTs • Group AHP • Rural Life Impacts Aspects • Evaluation.

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