Social Media: A New Way for Agricultural Entrepreneurs to Acquire Resources

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Abstract. The use of social media to develop agricultural entrepreneurship is a new phenomenon. The article summarizes four modes of information acquisition, information production, social communication and payment methods used by social entrepreneurs in social media, and analyzes social media from the perspective of resource acquisition. With regard to the effects of access to agricultural entrepreneurial resources, access to resources, and access to resources, the government, agribusiness, and entrepreneurs were finally asked to propose social media for agricultural entrepreneurship.

Introduction

In recent years, with the popularization of smart phones, social media with information functions and social functions has been widely used in agricultural entrepreneurial activities. According to JCB’s survey, 53% of UK farmers are using social media to exchange agricultural planting experience, get advice, and learn about the latest developments. In China, the practice of social media in the field of agriculture is also very rich. WeChat and Weibo are widely used in the management of agriculture. Agricultural communities, net red new farmers and net red agricultural products, such as Xinnonglian, Bihuifang Agriculture, and Oranges Chu, have emerged in an endless stream, setting off a new wave of agricultural entrepreneurship. In today's rural areas, with the process of urbanization, the entrepreneurial environment has undergone tremendous changes, and social media has become an important way to obtain resources. What are the main usage patterns of social media in the process of agricultural entrepreneurship? What impact does social media have on the acquisition of agricultural entrepreneurial resources? How to use social media to promote agricultural entrepreneurship? Through the analysis of literature, we find that in the previous studies, scholars mainly analyzed the access to resources for agricultural entrepreneurship from the perspective of rural political, economic, cultural macro-environment and rural social networks, and they lacked research on the above three important issues. It is necessary to strengthen the analysis of the use of social media in agricultural entrepreneurship to understand its impact on access to agricultural entrepreneurial resources and provide guidance for the development of contemporary agricultural entrepreneurial activities.

The Main Usage Patterns of Social Entrepreneurs' Social Media

Lu Wei and Wen Chen summarized the three aspects of information production, information acquisition and social communication when they studied social media usage patterns[1]. Zhen Feng et al. divided the application of social media into platform publishing, customer interaction, payment methods, information push, and complaint advice[2]. In conjunction with the practice of agricultural entrepreneurs, there are four main modes of social media use in current agricultural business activities.
Access to information

In order to effectively promote the start-up of agricultural entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs make full use of social media to acquire agricultural technology, operations management, markets and other aspects of information. Take WeChat as an example, it has a large number of agricultural-related public numbers, such as organic agriculture, farm planning, and agricultural entrepreneurship. As long as you subscribe for free, you can get regular information on the frontiers of agricultural entrepreneurship. No matter when you need specific information in a certain area, you can also search through social media. Professional agricultural training institutions use social media to set up paid courses. Farmers can use mobile phones to conduct online learning at home. The most important way to obtain information on social media is the community. By viewing the dynamics in the peer community and the information of the circle of friends, the agricultural entrepreneurs can continuously learn about the outside world.

Information production

The emergence of social media has enabled the production and dissemination of agricultural information with richer content and convenient methods. Farmers use the attributes of social media to process and publish their own text information, picture information and video information of their agricultural projects, and timely transmit the first-line information of agricultural production and operation to consumers. The evaluation, praise, and forwarding functions in social media have also been widely used. Many new professional farmers regularly publish their ideas and ideas for agricultural production in Weibo, Wechat, Qzone and have harvested a large number of fans. The promotion and publicity have played a good effect.

Social interaction

The emergence of social media has changed the social environment of agricultural entrepreneurs (especially small and micro-farming farmers). With social media, farmers can maintain contact with the outside world even in remote rural areas. With the popularity of smart phones, social media has become the main mode of social communication. Agricultural entrepreneurs use social media search and attention functions to connect with outstanding people in the field of agriculture or friends they are looking for. Inside the entrepreneurial team, communication and work are conducted on social media. Word messages, voice messages, and community notifications are widely used. Communication with different links or peers in the agricultural industry chain is also done on social media platforms. Communities established for different purposes have become a normal form of survival and virtual community effects have emerged. Agricultural entrepreneurs will initiate their own communities and initiate activities such as promotion, crowdfunding or interaction within the group to communicate with consumers. At the same time, they are also actively involved in various organizations that are conducive to their own agricultural entrepreneurial activities.

Payment method

In China, social media is also widely used as a very popular mobile payment method. Whether it is a small payment between a customer or a partner, the agricultural entrepreneur will prefer WeChat payment or Alipay payment. Some older agricultural entrepreneurs will not use WeChat themselves, but for the convenience of the transaction, they will ask the young people at home to help themselves apply for WeChat, specifically for payment.

Social Media's Influence on the Acquisition of Agricultural Entrepreneurs' Resources

Resource acquisition effect

From the perspective of content, the development of entrepreneurial activities of enterprises cannot be separated from material resources, market resources, financial resources, reputation resources, relationship resources and knowledge resources[3]. The widespread use of social media provides an effective way for the acquisition of these resources, enabling agricultural entrepreneurs
to obtain unprecedented rich resources, thereby promoting the development of entrepreneurial activities.

**Material resources.** Social media is a technology application based on Internet technology. Various agricultural products such as agricultural machinery, agricultural products, and pesticides needed for agricultural entrepreneurship can be purchased through the Internet platform. Compared with the past, there is also larger room for choice. Through community discussions and community recommendations, entrepreneurs can also purchase more suitable and safer agricultural products, with more abundant material resources.

**Market resources.** Market resources are orders and customers in the process of agricultural entrepreneurship. In the traditional agricultural industrial chain, the entrepreneurial performance of agricultural start-up companies, especially breeders and aquaculture enterprises, is often not high, because there is serious information asymmetry between producers and consumers. Farmers often cannot find a reasonable outlet for their products, nor do they know what kinds of agricultural products consumers need, so farm products are often unmarketable. Social media offers an opportunity to reach other markets, engage with consumers, gain public influence, and add value to their products. Agricultural entrepreneurs use social media to carry out low-cost intensive publicity and word of mouth spread, accessing to more customer groups. The interaction with social media as a tool is also conducive to the consumer terminal's feedback on information. Entrepreneurs can constantly adjust and improve their agricultural operations, such as adding new product types, improving product tastes or packaging, and so on. The interaction has increased a large number of customers' stickiness, greatly reduced the company's customer development and acquisition costs, and improved the company's sales performance.

**Financial resources.** Financial resources are the financial support needed for the development of start-up companies. Agricultural enterprises have started to use crowdfunding through social media to solve the problem of insufficient funds in the early stage of agricultural development and have achieved good results. Some social media such as Alipay also have online credit loans and overdraft functions, which can also solve the emergency funding needs of small and micro-agricultural start-ups.

**Reputation resources.** Social media is an efficient new media, and the speed of dissemination is particularly fast. Agricultural entrepreneurs can use Weibo to obtain a wide range of popularity, and use WeChat to quickly obtain effective recognition in the circle of friends. Reputation resources have the function of tool resources and can positively promote the acquisition of other resources.

**Relationship resources.** The value of social media lies in its ability to enhance farmers' social capital and bring more transparency, participation, trust, and realism to the supply chain. Wei-ping Chen conducted surveys on seven community-supported farms in Beijing, Nanjing, Fuzhou, and Guangdong Provinces finding that in the context of community-supporting agriculture, consumer social media participation has a significant direct positive effect on consumer trust[4].

**Knowledge resources.** Knowledge resources refer to the agricultural-related information, agricultural technology, and agricultural management knowledge that are needed in starting a business. Social media is based on the Internet. As a media tool, it facilitates the acquisition of related information technology. As a social tool, the social media community enriches the access of information for agricultural entrepreneurs. The mobile learning function developed through mobile social media has gradually become a supplement to formal learning, making up for the lack of continuous learning approaches for agricultural entrepreneurs. With the increase in learning, the entrepreneurial abilities of entrepreneurs are also rising, which is conducive to their entrepreneurial activities.

**The ability to acquire resources**

The ability to acquire resources refers to the ability of actors to obtain useful resources. In the process of agricultural entrepreneurship, the ability of different entrepreneurial entities to acquire resources is different. The scale of the enterprise, the gender, age, education level, and social network of the entrepreneur all affect the acquisition of resources. However, the emergence of
social media makes the acquisition of entrepreneurial resources more fair. Even entrepreneurs with different endowments can use the social media platform to better access the entrepreneurial resources they need, and provide more favorable conditions for the development of entrepreneurial activities.

The efficiency of resource acquisition

The efficiency of resource acquisition is an important dimension to measure entrepreneurial resource acquisition[5]. Researchers believe that the time spent on resource acquisition, the cost level, the energy spent, and the convenience of access to resources are just a few examples of how effective ones are. The research found that social media is a very useful tool in agricultural marketing[6]. It saves farmers time and money in obtaining information. Farmers generally reflect that social media is very convenient to use. As long as there are smart phones, they can be free from time and place restrictions, and they can also make full use of fragmentation time without affecting normal production and business activities.

How to Make Full Use of Social Media to Promote Agricultural Entrepreneurship

Government provides learning support and protection

The government can increase the content of social media information release, social use, information acquisition and mobile payment operations in agricultural training courses to help more farmers learn to use social media. It must also improve the rural information network facilities and provide good protection for social media and agricultural entrepreneurial activities.

Agricultural Entrepreneurs Use Social Media to Improve Their Entrepreneurial Ability

Agricultural entrepreneurs should actively study the use of social media, acquire advanced knowledge and technology of agricultural entrepreneurship through mobile learning, use social media to conduct social interaction with their peers, and continuously improve their entrepreneurial ability.

Agricultural enterprises use social media to improve their entrepreneurial performance

Agricultural enterprises should establish the concept of science and technology for the development of agriculture, and make full use of the different functions of social media to promote agricultural projects, conduct social interactions with customers and peers, and acquire the resources needed for entrepreneurship, ultimately improving the performance of agricultural entrepreneurship.

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References


