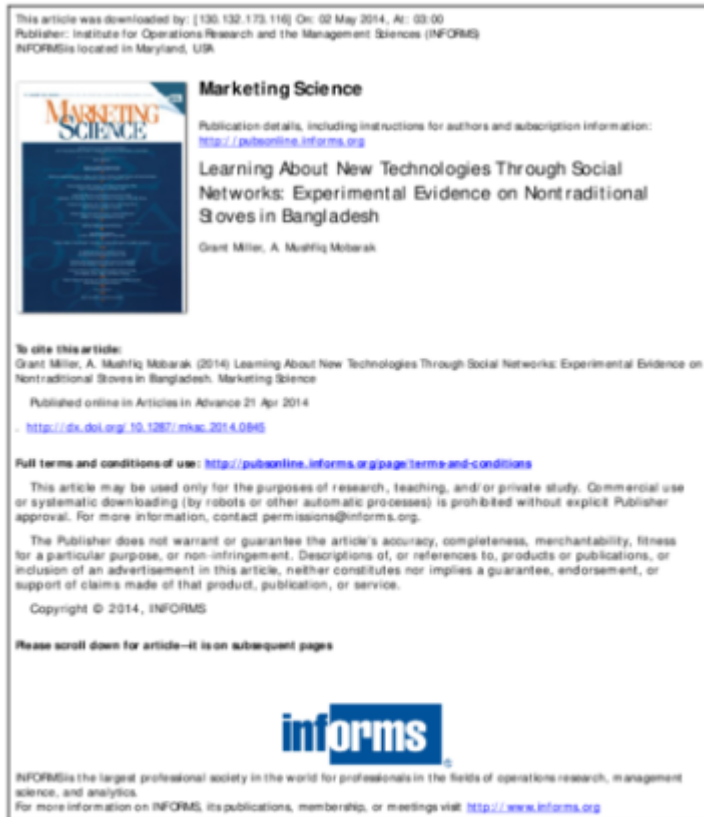**Authors**

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Learning About New Technologies Through Social Networks: Experimental Evidence on Nontraditional Stoves in Bangladesh

There are few marketing studies of social learning about new technologies in lowincome countries. This paper examines how learning through opinion leaders and social networks influences demand for non-traditional cookstoves – a technology with important health and environmental consequences for developing country populations. We conduct marketing interventions in rural Bangladesh to assess how stove adoption decisions respond to (a)

learning the adoption choices of locally identified 'opinion leaders' and (b) learning about stove attributes and performance through social networks. We find that households generally draw negative inferences about stoves through social learning, and that social learning is more important for stoves with less evident benefits. In an institutional environment in which consumers are distrustful of new products and brands, consumers appear to rely on their networks more to learn about negative product attributes. Overall, our findings imply that external information and marketing campaigns can induce initial adoption and experiential learning about unfamiliar technologies, but sustained use ultimately requires that new technologies match local preferences.

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