Journal of Academia and Industrial Research (JAIR)
Volume 6, Issue 12, May 2018

ISSN: 2278-5213

Short Communication

A Scale to Measure Decision Making Pattern of Agricultural Extension Assistants in Assam

J.K. Sharma
Horticultural Research Station, Assam Agricultural University, Kahikuchi, Guwahati-781017, Assam
agriperson@gmail.com; +91 9435051697

Abstract

The present attempt was designed to develop a scale to measure decision making pattern of Agricultural Extension Assistants (AEAs) serving in the Agriculture Department in the state of Assam. The major steps followed for developing the scale were item collection, judges rating and ascertaining the reliability and validity of the scale. The final scale comprised of 12 statements and it was standardized for administration. The final scale reflected important dimensions in the job profile of AEAs such as planning, participation, management, implementation etc. which involve decision making on their part.

Keywords: Decision making pattern, agricultural extension assistant, item collection, judges rating.

Introduction

The Agricultural Extension Assistants (AEAs), formerly referred to as Village Level Extension Workers (VLEWs), are the grass root level extension personnel serving in the agricultural extension machinery of the Department of Agriculture, Govt. of Assam. They are generalists but go on to achieve a high degree of professional competency because of their exposure to the farmers' field situation on a daily basis. Because of their direct and close contact with farmers, the AEAs are the most widely sought after extension agents for information and advice by average farmers. In order to have a grasp and understanding of the different aspects of a AEAs job, it is necessary to know their decision making pattern. Decision making pattern is the way by which an Agricultural Extension Assistant (AEA) justifies his/her selection of the most efficient means from among available alternatives on the basis of scientific criteria to achieve success in his/her extension work. Keeping this in view, an attempt has been made to develop a scale to measure the decision making pattern of AEAs.

Materials and methods

Collection of statements: Based on an in-depth review of literature and discussion with the teachers and scientists of Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, as well as the officials working in the State Department of Agriculture, Assam, 24 statements covering the universe of the variable were constructed.

Judges rating of the statements: The statements so collected were sent to 50 judges for rating. They were requested to weigh the statements on a five-point continuum ranging from 'most relevant' to 'not relevant'. The panel of judges selected for the rating included officials from the State Department of Agriculture, Assam and scientists and teachers of Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat. Out of the 50 judges, 35 responded with their judgement. The responses of the judges were compiled as suggested by Thurston and Chave (1929). The interquartile range (Q) was computed to measure the dispersion of the statements on the scale. The statements having minimum Q values were finally selected. Thus the scale constructed consisted of 12 statements (10 positive and 2 negative).

Measuring reliability and validity: The reliability of the test was estimated with the help of split-half method (odd-even design) by applying the formula given by Rulon (1939). To measure the reliability of the statements, the scale was administered to a sample of 30 AEAs in the Kamrup and Goalpara districts of Assam. The scale was split into two sets on the basis of odd and even numbers of statements. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was calculated between the two sets and the score so derived was correlated using Spearman Brown Formula. The calculated reliability coefficient (0.72) was found highly significant, indicating that the scale was reliable for studying the concerned variable. Since the statements were constructed on the basis of field experiences and expert opinions, the scale was taken to have content validity.

*Corresponding author

Table 1. Final format of the scale on decision making pattern of AEAs.

Sl. No.	Statements	Response Category*				
		SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	Regular discussion with fellow AEAs working in similar situation helps in proper decision making regarding farm operations					
2	Arriving at a firm decision is increasingly difficult when the AEAs involve the farmers in decision making.					
3	Involvement of the farmers by the AEAs during decision making ensures timely adoption of proper recommendations.					
4	An AEA usually seeks guidance from superior officers in taking decisions regarding technical implementation of farm operations.					
5	An efficient AEA always give high priority in making accurate decisions about the farm information to be disseminated.					
6	Decision making on farm operation is a wasteful exercise as the decision could never be implemented.					
7	Farm leaders should always be involved in arriving at concrete decisions about farm operations to be taken.					
8	Collective decision making ensures harmony and healthy relations among the people.					
9	The AEA brings the decision of the farmers to superior officers/specialists for proper programme planning.					
10	Decision making by the AEA is a careful activity for establishing rapport with the farmers who will implement the decision.					
11	Ability to think and anticipate about the events likely to occur lead an AEA to take appropriate decisions on farm operations.					
12	A good decision has no value if it is not followed by implementation.					

*SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; UD = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree.

The intrinsic validity of the scale was estimated by taking the square root of the reliability coefficient (Guilford, 1954).

Results and discussion

The final format of the scale is presented in Table 1. In each statement there are five response categories viz., Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with scores of 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively for the positive statements. The scoring procedure was reversed for the negative statements. Thus the possible decision making score for any respondent on the scale varied from 12 to 60.

Conclusion

The standardized scale reflects several crucial components of programme planning, management and implementation that are part of a AEAs job profile requiring decision making. Therefore the same can be suitably utilized to measure the decision making pattern of Agricultural Extension Assistants.

References

1. Guilford, J.P. 1954. Psychometric methods, second edition. McGraw Hill, New Delhi, India, pp. 399.
2. Rulon, P.J. 1939. A simplified procedure for determining the reliability of a test by split halves. *Harr. Educ. Rev.* 9:99-103.
3. Thurston, L.L. and Chave, E.C. 1929. Measurement of attitude: A psychophysical method and some experiments with a scale for measuring attitude toward the church. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, USA, pp.59-66.

*Corresponding author