

Original Research Article

Job Competence of Agricultural Extension Officers in Nalgonda District of Telangana State

ABSTRACT

The research was conducted in the Nalgonda district of Telangana state. 120 Agricultural Extension Officers were selected for the study from the different Mandals of Nalgonda district. The data was collected regarding the profile and job competence levels of agricultural extension officers. The research used two types of rating techniques in rating the job competence level of agricultural extension officers were Self-rating and Superior rating. The results of the study revealed that the agricultural extension officers themselves rated 55.84 per cent of agricultural extension officers had a medium level of job competence and superiors rated 57.50 per cent of agricultural extension officers had a medium level of job competence. The finding of overall job competence of agricultural extension officers indicated that 65 per cent of agricultural extension officers had a medium level of job competence. According to the Self-rating agricultural extension officers had more competent in Communicative ability, Initiative, Empathy and Technical knowledge dimensions with the mean index of and in case of superior rating agricultural extension officers are more competent in Initiative, Communicative ability, Empathy, Judgement dimension with the mean index. The study focus on the job competence levels and various Competence dimensions and the relationship of independent variables with job competence.

Keywords: Job competence, Agricultural Extension Officers, Self-rating, Superior rating, Farmers

INTRODUCTION:

Human resource management plays an important role in preparing Agricultural Extension Officers

to meet the rapid changes in rural situations and developing the performance of the Agricultural Extension Officers working. The Agricultural Department needs a skilled Agricultural Extension Personnel who is capable of handling all the activities of agriculture in rural areas. The Agricultural Universities are the one which is responsible for preparing the skilled human resources viz Subject Matter Specialists, Scientists, and Extension Officers.

The major role of the AEOs is the dissemination of new technology or recommended practices to the farmers. teaching and demonstrating skills and practices to the farmers, motivating the farmers to adopt recommended practices, to bring the farmer's production problems to the attention of the

agricultural research station. A high level of competence is an important skill and quality required by govt Extension Personnel to perform their job more efficiently.

Job competence is defined as the ability of the person to complete the given task or assigned duties of job and it is an integral part of human resource management. To improve Agricultural Extension Officers' job competence, it is necessary to understand their levels of job competence to identify the factors that contribute to enhancing their job competence for their effective performance of their assigned duties.

Competencies are one of the most effective tools and approaches that organisations can use to place employees in the appropriate position within the organisation. The competencies are more concerned with the performance of employees and organisations. Once the workers are in the proper position, the organisation has the opportunity to plan for future career development. When competencies are clearly defined, workers become more effective and job timeliness is reduced. Agricultural extension workers are individuals who are in charge of achieving the goals of the extension system. The main goal of identifying competencies is to clarify the essential behavioural standards and specific tasks required by employees, as well as to determine the extent to which these standards are met by the employees.

In the agricultural department, the job competence of agricultural extension officers is evaluated to primarily to meet organizational goals such as promotions, transfers, and determining training needs. It is extremely difficult for employees to improve their level of competence unless they are well informed about their competence levels and their strong and weak points (Mishra, 2005).

The agricultural extension officers are grass root level workers in the agriculture department who directly work with farmers. The primary role of agricultural extension officers is to make the farmers in taking better decisions in farming and transfer the technologies so that agricultural extension officers should have more competent skills in making the farmer's life better.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Nalgonda district of Telangana state. The Nalgonda district is divided into three revenue divisions namely Nalgonda, Miryalguda, Devarkonda which consists

Mandal. The 120 agricultural extension officers were selected from all the Mandal of Nalgond district who were working in the agriculture department randomly. The data was collected regarding job competence of agricultural extension officers with the help of scale developed by Reddy (1990) with the slight modification which contains 10 dimensions were taken in 5-point continuum scale as a great deal, fairly much, to some degree comparatively little and not at all with scores of 4,3,2,1, and 0 respectively according to study his used in evaluating the job competence of agricultural extension officers. To analyse the overall job competence levels of the agricultural extension officers two types of rating techniques were used one is self-rating techniques which means rating provided by agricultural extension officers themselves and superior rating Techniques which means rating taken by superiors of agricultural extension officers. The overall job competence level of agriculture extension officers was found out based on the following formula:-

Overall Job Competence

$$(OJC) = (\text{Self-rating score of respondent} + \text{Superior rating score of respondent}) / 2$$

The overall job competence was taken to know the exact competence levels of the respondents and to remove the biases from the respondent's side.

The Agricultural Extension Officers were categorized separately based on the mean and standard deviation of the scores of Self-rating, Superior rating and overall job competence into low, medium, High.

The statistical tools used in the study were mean and standard deviation were used in the categorisation of the respondents, Mean index is used in the ranking of job competence dimensions. Co-efficient of correlation was adopted to find out the relationship of selected independent variables with the job competence levels of agricultural extension office

Results And Discussion

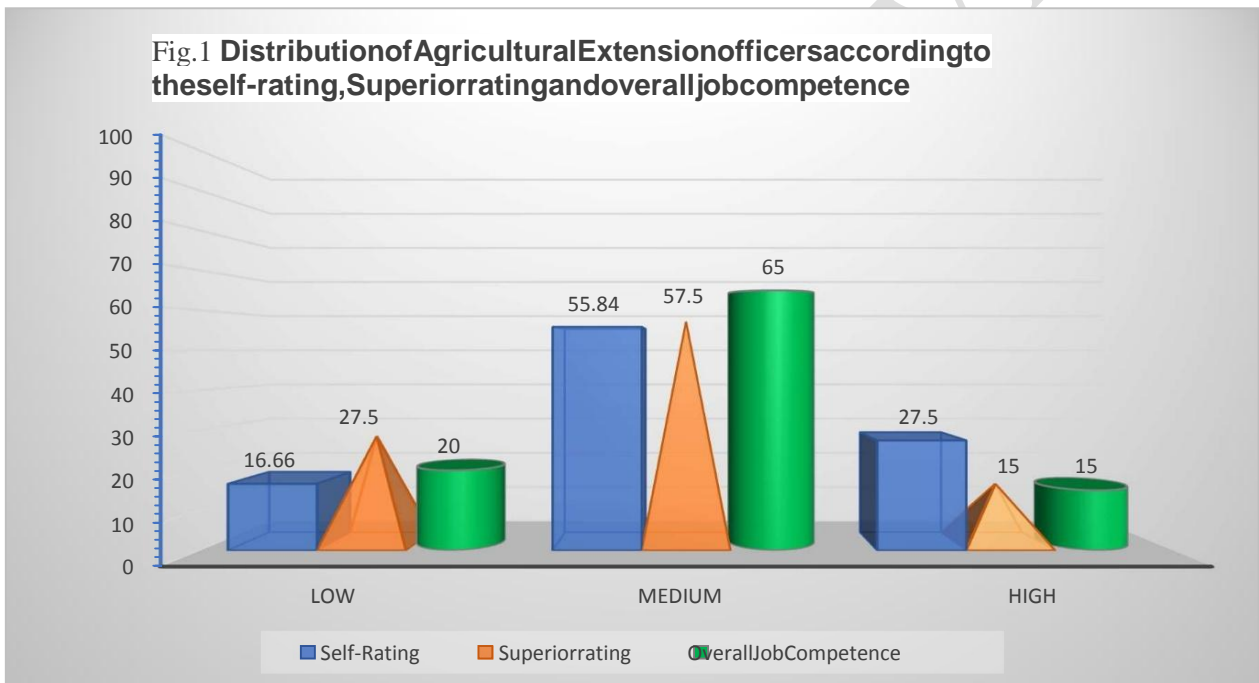
Figure 1 indicates that Agriculture Extension Officers are categorized into low, medium, high competence levels. It was observed that 16.66 per cent, 20 per cent and 27.50 were categorized into low level of job competence according to the Self-

rating, Superior rating and overall job competence respectively

The medium level of job competence was observed with percentage of respondents are 55.84 per cent, 65 per cent, 57.50 per cent were categorized according to the Self-rating, Superior rating and overall job competence respectively.

The high level of competence of respondents are 27.5 per cent, 15 per cent, 15 per cent were categorized according to the Self rating, Superior rating and overall job competence respectively. The results were supported by Kusumalatha, D. V. and Gowda, N. S. S. (2020).

It was concluded that the majority of the agricultural extension officers had a medium level of job competence this might be due to the lack more experience as agricultural extension officers as they were recently recruited and lack of time to improve their skills due to the busy



with the other department works.

Dimensionwise analysis

The data is shown in Table.1. indicates the mean index of self-rating and superior rating obtained

by Agricultural Extension Officers with respect to the different dimensions of job competence.

The communicative ability and initiative were determined highest mean score index in case of self-rating and reverse in case of superior rating which was followed by empathy, technical knowledge, guidance, adaptability, judgement, mental ability, creativity, self-development

respectively in the case of self-rating. while empathy, judgement, guidance, technical knowledge, creativity, mental ability, adaptability, and self-development respectively in case of superior rating.

It was concluded that communicative ability and initiative were found to be dominant in case of self-rating and superiors rating this might be due to the posting of Agricultural Extension Officers in native place as they were familiar with the local language and take the initiative in coordinating the farmers in organizing the meetings and implementation of schemes easily. The trend was observed by Debnath et al. (2014).

The self-development and creativity have the least mean score index in the case of self-rating this might be due to the Agricultural Extension Officers are not getting sufficient time to increase their capabilities in doing their duties efficiently and effectively due to the increasing work pressure and documentary work and lack of proper training programmes.

The self-development and adaptability had a least mean score index in case of superior rating this might be due to work pressure on Agricultural Extension Officers which hinder them to less time for their self-development. and due to lack of high experience in the job. The Agricultural Extension Officers were not fully adapted to the field situation in giving information to the field problems. From the results, we can conclude that still there is a need to improve the Agricultural Extension Officers to adapt to the field situations and self-development.

Table 1. Dimensions-wise analysis of job competence

Sl. No.	Dimension of job competence	Self-rating (AEO)		Superior-rating (MAO)	
		Mean index	Rank	Mean index	Rank
1	Technical knowledge	82.53	4	76.49	6
2	Guidance	81.18	5	76.66	5
3	Communicative Ability	87.56	1	79.89	2
4	Adaptability	80.59	6	73.40	9
5	Self-Development	76.28	10	68.09	10

6	Creativity	78.75	9	76.25	7
7	Empathy	83.57	3	78.75	3
8	Mental Ability	78.75	8	75.83	8
9	Initiative	86.73	2	83.22	1
10	Judgement	80.76	7	77.25	4

Relation analysis

Table 2 indicates that The Age, Education, Job experience, Training received, Achievement motivation, Job commitment and Mass media exposure of Agricultural Extension Officers had a positive and highly significant relationship with their job competence and health and level of aspiration had a positive and non-significant relationship. Job stress had negative and significant relation.

Relationship between Socio-personal variables with job competence

The positive and significant relationship of The Age, Education, Job experience, Training received with the job competence may be due following probable reasons due to increase in the age of the Agricultural Extension Officers provides many opportunities to develop their knowledge and practical skills by learning by doing to deliver their duties efficiently and effectively. The Agricultural Extension Officers who had more educational qualifications had the better technical knowledge, conceptual knowledge, practical knowledge, and understanding of various difficult situations in performing the duties. Having more job experience for Agricultural Extension Officers help them to be more familiar with the duties and responsibilities assigned by the department of agriculture and relate their experience in handling present difficult situations which in turn helps in delivering their duties efficiently. The Agricultural Extension Officers who had undergone more training had sharpened their skills, gained more practical knowledge, and filled the Agricultural Extension Officers with the expertise that are needed to fulfill the roles of agricultural extension officer jobs. The relationship of age and experience with the job competence the similar results were observed by the Nwaogu and Abiodun (2018).

The health of Agricultural Extension Officers had a positive and non-

significant relationship with their job competence this might be due to there are other various factors of organisation apart from the health which affects the job competence skill of the individual. The trend was observed by the Jayasingh, D. K. (2019).

Relationship between psychological variables with job competence

The table 2 shows that the achievement motivation and job commitment of Agricultural Extension Officers had a positive and highly significant relationship with the job competence. This might be due to the Agricultural Extension Officers who had high levels of Achievement Motivation trying hard to find out how and how the desired things can be achieved and the respondents who had committed to his job which keeps him energetic in delivering his duties and in gaining the competent skills to discharge his duties efficiently and effectively. This promotes high job competence skills. These trends were observed by the Vijay babu (2005), Raut (2006) and Begate (2009).

The job stress of Agricultural Extension Officers had a negative and significant relationship with their job competence. This indicates that when Agricultural extension officers have high work pressure it gives them less time to improve their knowledge and skill which in turn will show the effect on their job competency. The similar observation was founded by the Ferguson *et al.* (2012).

The level of aspiration of Agricultural Extension Officers had a positive and non-significant relationship with the job competence may be due to high level of aspiration of Agricultural Extension Officers were not matched with competence levels of them.

4.4.1.3 Relationship between communication variables with job competence

The table 2 indicates that mass media exposure of Agricultural Extension Officers had a positive and significant relationship with job competence. It can be concluded that mass media exposure exists a positive and significant relationship with job competence. This may be due to the Agricultural Extension Officers who have high mass media exposure obtaining more information and developing particular problem-solving skills, which lead to increased competency levels to deliver their

services to farmers.

Table 2. Relationship between independent variables with job competence

Sr. No	Characteristics	Coefficients of correlation 'r'
A	Socio-personal variables	
1.	Age	0.317**
2.	Education	0.286**
3.	Job experience	0.261**
4.	Training received	0.465**
5.	Health	0.082
B	Psychological variables	
6.	Job stress	-0.229*
7.	Level of aspiration	0.123
8.	Achievement motivation	0.423**
9.	Job commitment	0.281**
C	Communication variables	
10.	Mass media exposure	0.263**

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the Agricultural Extension Officers had a medium level of overall job competence may be due to the lack of high experience and training. Based on the above results increasing training periods will enable the extension personnel to make aware and trained in modern agricultural information. Dimension of job competence indicates that agricultural extension officers had good competent skills in communication skills and initiatives skills due to this posting the agricultural extension officers in the country should be posted their native place will increase the rapport with the farmers and for effective communication in their native language to make farmers more benefited and transfer technologies. The agricultural extension officers were least competent in their self-development so agricultural department should provide sufficient time and restrict them to their assigned duties of agriculture to perform their duties effectively.

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