

Competence-based recruitment and training for Extension professionals in Iran

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Introduction

Formal extension programs were started in Iran about fifty years ago. Nevertheless, the system Extension has not been brought about basic modifications and predominant reforms in the agricultural status of the country. Many factors are responsible for this situation. One of the more important factors is level of competence of extension employees. UNDP (1991) reported that ministry-based extension systems in developing countries, including Iran, do not have adequate financial resources to attract high quality and competent personnel and support basic operations. Consequently, extension staffs in these systems lack needed job competencies and motivation (Swanson, 1997). In this study an especial attention has been paid on competency of extension personnel, what they already have and what they should possess before and after recruitment.

Purpose of poster

The main purpose of this poster is to identify professional competencies for extension personnel to perform their jobs, those competencies that may be lacking and should be developed, and those competencies that should be strengthened. Strategies, including specific pre-service and in-service training programs to enhance personnel competencies will also be recommended.

Information to be shared

- Current and previous strategies for recruiting extension personnel, and positive and negative consequences arising there from.
- The most important competencies which extension professionals in Iran should possess.
- Competencies lacking among the majority of extension personnel and practical methods to create or renew them.
- Tailored training programs for extension professionals to increase their competencies and become more effective in their job.

Conclusion

Human resource development has not received enough consideration in the Extension system in Iran. Hence, extension personnel are not sufficiently progressive and qualified as expected by the government. Competency-based programming and training in higher education can fill the role of supplying needed personnel for extension organizations. Appropriate screening of extension personnel in the selection and recruitment process, combined with pre-service and in-service education are keys to enhance the competencies of professionals for effective job performance.

Educational Importance

Competence-based recruitment and training is advisable for not only extension agencies but also for all educational and administrative organizations. With the increasing shift from public sector to private sector extension, the need for qualified, competent personnel will grow. Competence-based extension services are the key to longevity and success for extension organizations in the future. Extension activities will be much more effective in assisting farmers, if competent professionals are recruited, trained, and continuously supported.