

## **Appraisal of the Extension's Staffs' Professional Satisfaction: Implication for Organization Development**

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**Introduction** Agricultural extension education, like other major institutions, is facing one of its most challenging times as it strives to redefine its mission, structure, service delivery methodologies, and its stakeholders, in this most dynamic and turbulent policy and technological environment of the 21st century. Iran's agricultural extension system epitomizes a benevolent authoritative organization where most of the decision-making and goal setting are done at the top of the organization. This has been having an adverse effect on the extension staffs' professional satisfaction. However, the organization has a great potential to become a participative management system because the great majority of the professional staffs desire a participatory management which would have a great effect on extension's staffs' professional satisfaction.

**Purpose and Methodology of the Study** The primary purpose of this study was to measure the Iran's extension management system's Profile of Organizational Characteristics (POC), and assess the organization's staffs' professional satisfaction under various management systems. Two sets of questionnaires were used to compile data for this study. Likert's instrument of POC, and an extensive satisfaction questionnaire which was developed by author (and tested in an earlier study) were utilized for the study. Content validity of the POC instrument was well established in the literature, and a panel of experts established the content validity of the professional satisfaction questionnaire. The reliability of the instruments were established by a pilot study and Cronbach alpha of 0.87, and 0.74, were obtained for the management, and professional satisfaction sections respectively. The population of the study consisted of all national extension's professional staffs. Seven provincial extension organizations representing the geographical region of the north, central, south, northeast, southeast, northwest, and southwest, were selected and 375 professional staffs were sampled by a complete randomized sampling technique.

**Major Points and Lessons Learned** Even though, the extension organization in Iran was found to be a system-2 (based on Likert's specification), it has a great potential to move rapidly toward system-4 (participatory management systems), because of the staffs' perception toward system-4 and other organizational features found in the study. The respondents' mean level of professional satisfaction was found to be at a "moderate" level. There was a moderate association between the participants' perception of management system and the staffs' level of professional satisfaction. This implied that improving the existing management system could enhance the staffs' professional satisfaction. About 20% of the variation in management system could be explained by the respondents' professional characteristics, their tenure, and their level of participation in team activities. This implied that there are other factors that could explain the remaining variance in professional staff's perception of management system that were not investigated in this study.

**Educational Importance** The POC instrument could provide a valuable tool for organizational development and transition process toward improving the system. Experts indicated when an organization shifts from a traditional authoritarian organization to a more participatory organizational structure, performance improves, costs are reduced, and improvement occurs in the satisfaction, motivation, and health of the members of the organization. However, the success of participatory strategy was found to be dependent not only on a change in the attitudes and behaviors of the extension leaders and their personnel, but also on institutional and other contextual factors.