

PERCEPTION OF INSERVICE TRAINING NEEDS AS RELATED TO SOME SELECTED FACTORS

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Determination of training need has been an important area of research in recent years. But a review of research studies in the area will reveal great variation in the results. This variation can be explained only if the relationship of training need perception with other relevant factors are established. Attempts to examine such relationships have been rare. Factors like attitude towards profession, length of service, educational level previous training etc. can have an influence, theoretically, on the perception of training need. This study empirically examined the relationship of some of the relevant factors with the perception of inservice training need of the Agricultural Extension Officers.

Materials and methods

The data for this study were obtained from the Agricultural Extension officers of Kerala State through mailed questionnaires. One hundred and seven officers provided data. Thirty seven officers did not respond. Training need perception was measured by a scale constructed for the purpose. The scale had seventy four items selected from a list of training areas. The items were presented in a four point response continuum and the respondents were asked to mark any appropriate point in the continuum of all the seventy four items. Each point was assigned a definite score. A perception score for each individual was obtained by adding up the scores of the seventy four items. Professional preference was measured by indirect method and the other variables were measured by direct questions.

Data obtained from 107 respondents were analysed by Chi-Square test. Kendall's co-efficient of concordance, as explained by Siegal, (1956) was used to determine the agreement among different categories of respondents.

Results and discussion

1. Length of Service

The mean training need perception scores of the respondents with different length of service for the different subject matter areas are presented in Table 1.

Table I. Mean training need perception score and ranks according to length of service.

Subject areas.	Upto 3		3—6 Years		6—9 Years.		above 9 years	
	G 1		G2		G3		G 4	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Agronomy	1.572	5	1.222	4	0.825	4	1.056	4
Plant Protection	1.987	2	1.536	2	1.166	2	1.496	2
Engineering	2.022	1	1.867	1	1.193	1	1.626	1
Horticulture	1.795	3	1.103	5	0.939	5	0.902	5
Soil Science	1.677	4	1.225	3	0.609	3	1.114	3
Extension	0.789	6	0.054	6	0.047	6	0.349	6
Mean	1.498		0.998		0.772		0.656	
Dif.	0.500		0.226		0.116			
CD(.01)	0.187		0.143		0.164			
		G1	G2	G3	G4			

Kendall Co-efficient of Concordance W: 0.88 * *

The Table reveals that the training need perception of the groups with 3 years' service and 3 to 6 years' service did not differ significantly while the two groups had significant difference with the groups having 6 or more years' of service. As the table shows there is a gradual decrease in the mean perception score as the length of service increases. Agricultural Extension officers with more service perceives less need for inservice training compared to those who had joined service recently. The Senior Agricultural Extension Officers seem to have a feeling that they already have necessary knowledge input required for their profession. They may not be aware of the recent technological advances in agriculture. The young subjects who have come out of the college very recently are aware of the rapid and new development taking place in Agricultural Sciences and they are inquisitive to learn more. Sharma and Singh (1970) also found similar trend while studying the inservice training needs of Animal Husbandry Extension Officers of Punjab.

The Kendall co-efficient of concordance is significant which indicates that the different groups had significant agreement among them regarding the importance of training in the different subject matter areas.

2. Professional preference

Professional preference, defined as the preference for professional subject like Agriculture, Medicine, Engineering etc , was measured by indirect elicitation. The significant Chi-square value (Table 2) indicates that there is relationship between professional preference and training need perception. As much as 48 percent of the respondents who prefer agriculture as their profession has a score range of 225 to 250 while only 10.9 percent of those who prefer Medical profession is under this range. Those who prefer professions other than agriculture perceive less need for inservice training. Their unfavourable attitude towards the profession might have reduced their desire for further learning in the subject.

3. Subject preference

Preference of the respondents for the different subjects of agricultural science was measured. The Chi-square value (Table 2) is significant which confirms the relationship between preference for subjects and training need perception. These respondents who prefer Agronomy, Entomology and Pathology perceive more need for inservice training when compared to those who prefer other subjects.

Table 2. Relationship of selected variables with perception of inservice training need.

S.No.	Variable	Chi Square value
1.	Length of Service	8.28 **
2	Professional preference	13.24 **
3.	Training duration	2.32
4.	Subject preference	13.95 **
5.	Venue of training.	8.84 **
6.	Previous training.	6.05 **

4. Training duration

The Chi-Square (Table 2) is not significant. This shows that there is no relationship between expressed training duration and the training need perception. It is likely that in expressing the training duration the respondents might not have considered the content of the training but only the extent of time they can spend for the training.

5. Venue of training.

In order to examine the relationship of preference for the place of training and the training need perception of the respondents preference for the different possible venues of training was measured. The Chi-square (Table 2) is significant and hence it can be concluded that there is relationship between venue preference and training need perception. As much as 81.3 percent of the respondents who prefer Agricultural college as the venue registers the maximum perception score in the range of 225-250. It is likely that the Agricultural Extension Officers who perceived more need for inservice training considered Agricultural college as a suitable place having all the elements necessary for imparting training at a high level. They might have considered Agricultural college as an institution capable of imparting advanced knowledge in Agriculture.

6. Previous training.

It is important to examine whether the previous training experience of the officers has any relationship with their present training need perception or not. The Chi-Square (Table 2) is significant. This confirms that there is relationship between these two factors. The training need perception of those who had already undergone training is more when compared to those who had no previous training. This indicates that the trained people are aware of the value and utility of inservice training.

Summary

The study has examined the relationship of six factors with that of the training need perception. Of these six factors, length of service, professional preference, subject preference, training venue preference and previous training had significant relationship while training duration had no relationship with the perception of training need,

Acknowledgement

The authors are grateful to the Dean Agricultural college, for providing facilities for the investigation.

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(M.S. received: 5-7-1972)