

Reasons for the Failure of Agricultural Extension Using Grounded Theory (Case Study: Lorestan Agricultural Jihad)

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ABSTRACT

Agricultural extension has become an important structural policy tool to help farmers to be more competitive in the world market. Extension activities are being pulled in many directions and a wide range of activities. However although public extension organizations are common in developing counties, they are often their effectiveness is limited by many deficiencies and challenges and extension system as failing. So, the extension organization has not succeeded and the current extension model needs to be reformed. Therefore, in this research, we have tried to study the causes of the failure of agricultural extension through Classical Grounded Theory (CGT). In this regard, the statistical population of the study was members of the Khorramabad Agricultural Jihad and opinion leaders in the Khorramabad which were selected by purposeful sampling (15 persons). In the correct study, the result of coding collected data in different ways such as interview, observation and documents, which led to extract of 90 concepts and 15 categories. The results showed that categories "lack of attention to the agricultural sector", "executive policies", "economic factors", "structural weaknesses", "management weaknesses", "lack of technical and personal knowledge of experts", "The weakness of the system of higher education" and "weakness in facilities" were the reasons for the failure of agricultural extension. Strategic categories also include "reviewing the training of experts and empowering them," "focusing on farmers' wants and needs," "providing effective planning and plans", "monitoring and accountability", "occupational safety" and "balance between the pillars of extension". In this regard, suggestion following is forwarded, the categories of the training of experts their and empowerment, which in this regard suggested that mid-career training classes in order to update the knowledge of the staff and increase their knowledge and skills, they should be held.

Keywords: Agricultural Extension, Failure, Grounded Theory, Khorramabad

Extended Abstract

Objectives

The goals of agricultural extension include transferring information from the global knowledge base and from local research to farmers, enabling them to clarify their own goals and possibilities, educating them on how to make better decisions, and stimulating desirable agricultural development. Thus, extension services provide human capital-enhancing inputs, including information flows that can improve rural welfare. However, in developing countries agricultural extension services unable to cope with the dynamic demands of farmers and a recent worldwide review in this countries refers to agricultural extension services as "failing" and "moribund." In "disarray or barely functioning at all. Therefore, the purpose of this study this study is to investigate the causes of the failure of agricultural extension services through Classical Grounded Theory (CGT) Iran.

Methods

This study adopted Grounded Theory approach because it is ideally suited to construct a data-based theory that can be used as a basis for future research. In this study, participants were members of the Khorramabad Agricultural Jihad and opinion leaders in the Khorramabad which were selected by purposeful sampling (15 persons). After collecting data using the interview, the analysis process was adopted according to the Classical Grounded Theory procedure. In the current study, the result of coding collected data in different ways such as interview, observation and documents which led to extract, 90 concepts and 15 categories. Finally, the theory was based on the close relationship between the categories.

Results

The first step of data analysis was open coding. In this step, interviews were transcribed and were coded by hand manner. The result of open coding was extraction of 90 concepts and 15 categories. The results of this step showed that categories "lack of attention to the agricultural sector", "executive policies", "economic factors", "structural weaknesses", "management weaknesses", "lack of technical and personal knowledge of experts", "The weakness of the system of higher education" and "weakness in facilities" were the reasons for the failure of agricultural extension. Strategic categories also include "reviewing the training of experts and empowering them," "focusing on farmers' wants and needs," "providing effective planning and plans", "monitoring and accountability", "occupational safety" and "balance between the pillars of extension".

The second and third steps are searching participants' main concern and later select the core category and naming it. Main concern and the core category was the causes of the failure of Agricultural extension Khorramabad.

The fourth step is selective coding. Simultaneously with validating participants' main concern and the core category, we went on to selective coding, which meant limiting coding to those variables that were related to the core category.

The Fifth step is theoretical coding. In this step, we discussed different ways of relating the concepts to each other and how it would be possible to put the participants' main concern in the model.

The sixth step is conceptual mapping and models. In this step we the first attempt to express key concepts of the theory and how they were related to each other. The main concern (the causes of the failure of Agricultural extension Khorramabad) was put in the middle to illustrate what was driving the participants to action.

Discussion

The agricultural extension services in developing countries to acts as effective institutions, they must 1) Emphasize on reviewing the training of experts and empowering them. Extension experts should possess core competencies such as knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors that help them attain excellence in their professions. Thus, extension must continue to succeed as a knowledge-based organization within an information-driven culture. Success and the ability to thrive as a knowledge-based organization is dependent upon creativity and innovation of extension agents. If implemented successfully, there are a multitude of benefits for an organization.

2) Agricultural extension must pay attention to farmers' wants and needs. Extension services will be sustainable if they follow a farmer-centered (demand-driven) approach, encourage participation of farmers and other stakeholders in extension processes (participatory), and involve

NGOs and farmer cooperatives as extension service providers (pluralistic). Thus, scholars have highlighted the need for active participation of farmers in extension processes, including decision making, so that farmers can voice their needs and can demand and get programs that they deem appropriate. Because, agricultural extension activities are mainly based on voluntary participation. Therefore, the wants and needs of farmers have to be taken into consideration. In most cases, if the extension services are not adapted to the cases of farmers correctly, failure becomes inevitable.

3) Providing effective planning and plans is one of the ways to successfully extension agriculture. "Program planning, implementation and evaluation emerged as significant predictors of performance" of extension professionals extension. Thus, extension professionals not only have to understand planning and do planning within their organizations, they also have to facilitate their clients in doing the same.

4) Monitoring and accountability of extension organizations is another way of agricultural extension success. To deliver extension programs effectively, extension organizations need to function well. Extension professionals should therefore establish structure, organize processes, develop and monitor resources, and lead change to obtain extension outcomes effectively and efficiently.

5) Occupational safety is one of the strategies to agricultural extension success. Indeed, occupational safety among experts and managers of agricultural extension in turn impacts on the work ethic of them, motivating them to do agricultural extension activities and thus lead to agricultural extension success.

6) Interdependence between education, extension and research is widely recognized. Indeed, there are poor links between, education, research and extension programs, the results of research are not turned into productivity gains by extension services. Thus the balance between education, extension and research leads to the success of agricultural extension services.