ASSESSMENT OF FARMERS’ TRAINING NEEDS IN AHVAZ FOR SOIL-RELATED ISSUES

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ABSTRACT

Agricultural training is a factor to adopt modern technologies and to apply scientific methods of agriculture by producers and beneficiaries. The present research aims to study information of farmers in Ahvaz about soil-related issues to determine educational priorities for them. It was performed through conducting field study by a researcher-made questionnaire and filling out the questionnaires by farmers. Five soil-related questions were posed and 500 questionnaires were filled out. Normalization of data was performed by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (K-S test). The test’s significance level was determined as 0.097. To study and measure training needs, mean of each index was compared with the average amount (3) using t-student test. The results showed that knowledge of people about soil-related issues is lower than average and training people in this concern is necessary and it is recommended.

INTRODUCTION

Everybody knows the significance of agricultural development and its vital role in advancing goals of countries, especially the developing countries. Experts and authorities also believe that its realization is mostly dependent on correct development and management of productive and entrepreneurial human resource.

Meanwhile, agricultural training is a factor to adopt modern technologies and to apply scientific agricultural methods by producers and beneficiaries. Their skills and abilities for optimal use develop their forces talents and lead to improving production of agricultural products.

Training needs assessment is an action that reveals the gap or difference between «what exists» and «what should be» and shows what point training should emphasize on [9].

Assessment of training - promotional needs is important, especially to select and prioritize objectives. Being aware of opportunities, issues, and problems of learners are among the major and preliminary points in each planning, as setting budgets and preparing required devices and facilities for each term is related to pinpointing objectives and recognizing issues and problems of learners. By assessing training-promotional needs, we may know weaknesses and strengths of learners’ status and make plans to make them reach a favorable level. After collecting and interpreting them, assessment of training-promotional needs is considered as the most important stage in planning [8].

Information collection methods among health services experts in Western Azarbaijan province, Moballeghi [6] showed that the use of personal collection among the experts is more than any other collection.

Zahravi stated that there is a significant relationship between the field of activity of authorities and type of the statistical information used by them.

Eslami [3] realizes that about 80% of the managers of Yasa Company believed that management information systems are vital for promptness, accuracy, and authenticity of decisions.

Nour Mohammad discovers that most specialists believe that performing research affairs is the main incentive to search information.

Akrarim [1] proved that food industries in Mashhad lack efficient information centers.

Soleimani [3] states that principals of secondary schools lack required technical, human, and conceptual skills and they need training in these fields.

The research conducted by Mohammad et al. [5] showed that lack of technical knowledge about plantation, crop management, and harvest respectively explains 3, 19, and 2 variables about wheat wastes.

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Methodology:
1- Specifications of the Region under Study:
The present research was carried out in Ahvaz province on the geographical coordination of 31° 20’ north latitude and 48° 40’ east longitude, in the lowland of Khuzestan 18 meters above sea level. According to the latest official statistics, 32% of the population of Khuzestan province live in Ahvaz metropolis and 35% live in the margin of the city. Maximum temperature in Khuzestan is between 50°C to 55°C and relative humidity exceeds 90 percent.

2- Statistical Population:
Statistical population of the research included farmers of Ahvaz region during crop year 2012- 2013. They were selected through stratified random sampling. Cochran Relation was used to estimate sample population. Based on this equation, volume of sample population was determined as 500 people.

3- Research Tools:
To determine training needs of the farmers for soil-related issues, four multiple-choice questions were formulated. Each question had only one answer with a score between 0 and 20. Normalization of data was carried out using K–S test. The data were then analyzed statistically by SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned earlier, four questions were included in the questionnaire to assess training needs for soil-related issues. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of the answers to the questions concerning soil-training variable.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of training soil issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about soil tissue and its effects on cultivation</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about soil structure and its effects on cultivation</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0.975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about lime of soil and its effects on cultivation</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>0.973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about minerals and its effects on cultivation</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0.998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil training</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With a glance at the above table, we notice that the mean of soil training variable and all the relevant factors are smaller than the average value.

To study the needs of farmers for soil training and all four factors thereof, we will compare all the factors with the mean value (3) to specify whether people’s knowledge and following that need for less or more training exceeds the average value. As Table 2 shows, one sample t-Test was used for making the comparison.

Table 2: Results for training index of soil-related issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>t-Test Value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about soil tissue and its effects on cultivation</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.956</td>
<td>-7.733</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>less than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about soil structure and its effects on cultivation</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0.975</td>
<td>-10.063</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>less than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about lime of soil and its effects on cultivation</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>0.973</td>
<td>-12.024</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>less than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about minerals and its effects on cultivation</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0.998</td>
<td>-9.88</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>less than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil training</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.890</td>
<td>-10.892</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>less than average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With respect to p-value column, the calculated mean values for soil training index, and its 4 related variables indicate that people’s knowledge of soil information and its 4 related variable is less than the mean value. Therefore, training people in this field seems to be necessary.

REFERENCES


