

Usefulness of foundation course and trainee's satisfaction

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Abstract: The Staff Training Unit (STU), Directorate of Extension, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad is organizing institutional training courses; field oriented training programmes for various personnel of private, government and quasi-government organizations. The 'Foundation Course Training' is one such course where the Agricultural Officers of the Karnataka State, Department of Agriculture are trained. The present investigation was undertaken to study the satisfaction and usefulness of the training with regard to the Foundation Course organized by STU of UAS, Dharwad. The study was conducted in seven districts, of the state falling under the jurisdiction of UAS, Dharwad. The sample for the study composed of 150 officials of the KSDA who had attended this training during 2013-2014. Mailed questionnaire was used to collect information and suitable statistical tools were used for analyzing the data. The study revealed that, majority (63.30%) of the trainees fall within the age group 36-50 years and 31 per cent of the trainees had were Postgraduates. About 35 per cent of the trainees had 14 to 23 years of total experience. A large majority of the trainees (90.70%) had high level of information seeking behavior and 80.70 per cent of the trainees perceived their workload as average. More than 90 per cent of trainees were fully satisfied with training atmosphere and break timings during the training. Between 86-88 per cent were fully satisfied with facilities provided in the classroom, food & accommodation, preparation of lectures and clarity of presentation. About 86 per cent of trainees were partially satisfied with balance of theory-practical ratio, followed by duration of training (81.30%). Majority of the trainees (66.00%) expressed that training programmes organized on Integrated Pest Management and Integrated Farming Systems were most useful.

Key words: Foundation course, Satisfaction, Training, Usefulness

Introduction

Training is the process of improving knowledge, skill and changing attitude of an individual for doing a specific job. As the situation changes people also need to acquire the new knowledge, skill and attitude to cope with changing environment. Therefore, training has continued to be the most important device for developing individuals work efficiency.

The Staff Training Unit at UAS, Dharwad was started in 1992 with a view to promote professional competency among the staff of various organizations within and outside the state of Karnataka. The STU is organizing institutional training courses; field oriented training programmes for various personnel of private, government and quasi-government organizations. The "Foundation Course Training" is one such course where the Agricultural Officers of the Karnataka State Department of Agriculture are trained. The present study aims to know the satisfaction and usefulness of the training with regard to the foundation course organized by STU of UAS, Dharwad. The objectives of the structure to study the socio-psychological characteristics of the trainees, to study the satisfaction levels of trainees about different aspects of foundation course and to study the extent of usefulness of foundation course training in effective transfer of technologies.

Material and methods

The ex-post facto research design was adopted and the study was conducted during 2015-16 in purposively selected districts under the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad. viz.,

Dharwad, Gadag, Belagavi, Haveri, Vijayapur, Bagalkot and Uttara Kannada of Karnataka state. The Staff Training Unit, UAS, Dharwad is organizing different types of training programmes every year to officials of different development departments.

The sample for the study consisted of 150 officials of the State Department of Agriculture who had attended the "Foundation Course Training" during 2013-2014. A questionnaire was developed keeping in mind the objectives of the study. The data was collected through mailed questionnaire. Data was analyzed by simple frequencies and percentages. Satisfaction was measured using a three point continuum ranging from fully satisfied, partially satisfied and dissatisfied with scores of 3, 2, 1, respectively (Singh and Pandey, 2012). While usefulness was measured using a three point continuum ranging from most useful, useful and somewhat useful. Further, the respondents were grouped into three categories following the equal distribution method based on class interval procedure (Manjula, 2000).

Results and discussion

Table 1 depicts the socio-psychological characteristics of the trainees who attended the Foundation Course Training.

Age

It is seen that majority (63.30%) of the trainees belonged to middle age group (36-50 years). About 25 per cent of them belonged to old age group (51 and above) and remaining 11.30 per cent of the trainees were in the young age (18-35 years) category. This could be because majority of them had been promoted to the positions AAOs after putting in a service of 15

Table 1. Socio-psychological characteristics of the trainees

(n=150)

SI. No	Characteristics	Category	Trainees	
			Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	Young age (18-35 years)	17	11.30
		Middle age (36-50 years)	95	63.30
		Old age (51 and above)	38	25.30
2	Gender	Male	121	80.70
		Female	29	19.30
3	Education	SSLC	23	15.30
		Pre-University level	22	14.70
		Basic Science / Arts graduates	25	16.70
		B. Sc. (Agri. & allied) graduates	34	22.70
		M. Sc. (Agri. & allied) graduates	46	30.70
5	Experience (Years)	a) Total experience		
		<13	50	33.30
		14 to 23	53	35.30
		>23	47	31.30
		b) Experience in present post		
		<7	96	64.0
		8 to 13	41	27.30
		>13	13	08.70
6	Trainings undergone	Up to 5 trainings	55	36.70
		6 -10 trainings	59	39.30
		>10 trainings	36	24.00
7	Information seeking behaviour	Low (< 11)	-	-
		Medium (12 to 15)	14	9.30
		High (> 15)	136	90.70
8	Perceived workload	Very light	-	-
		Light	16	10.70
		Average	121	80.70
		Heavy	13	8.70
		Very heavy	-	-

to 20 years as Agriculture Assistant. Moreover these employees who are in the mid of their career may have been deputed for these trainings as they need to update their knowledge on recent developments in the field of agriculture. The findings are similar with the findings of Bosco (2000) who reported that most AAOs for his study were in the age range of 35-50 year.

Gender

The gender distribution of trainees reveals that the trainings were highly dominated by male trainees (80.70%) and there were only 19.30 per cent females. Until recently agriculture subject was dominated by males and since only boys used to enroll themselves, most employees especially the middle age group are males. Due to this we have seen that more number of trainees were males. The findings are similar with the findings of Kaur *et al.* (2010).

Education

The result presented in Table 1 reveals that, 30.70 per cent of the trainees were M.Sc. (Agri. & Allied) degree, 22.70 per cent of them were B.Sc. (Agri. & Allied) graduates, 16.70 per cent of them were basic science / arts graduates, 15.30 per cent of them were educated up to SSLC and 14.70 per cent of the trainees had education up to PUC. How even the highest number of the trainees had a (30.70%) post graduate degree. This may be due to fact that boys and girls these days do not stop studying at the graduate level. Moreover a higher degree will lead to specialization in particular subjects and will also increase the job prospects. With this in view most of the employees of the KSDA have taken up post graduation. The results are in confirmation with the study by Faiz and Narayanaswamy (2011) and Patel *et al.* (2012) who also found that majority of trainees had a post graduate degree.

Experience

The total experience of the trainees as shown in Table 1 indicates that 35.30 per cent of them had between 14 to 23 years experience. This was followed by 33.30 per cent trainees with less than 13 years experience and 31.30 per cent trainees with more than 23 years of experience. The long period of experience could be because government employees hardly change jobs. Once they join the State Department of Agriculture they are there till they retire. As has already have seen most trainees were middle aged and had put in considerable service.

It was also observed that in the present post, majority of the trainees (64.00%) had less than 7 years experience, followed by 27.30 per cent of the trainees who had between 8 to 13 years experience and only 8.70 per cent of the trainees had more than 13 years experience. The probable reason could be because of their promotion into the present post *i.e.*, from AAs to AAOs.

Trainings undergone

It is evident from Table 1 that 39.30 per cent of the trainees had undergone 6-10 training programmes. About 37 per cent had undergone up to 5 trainings and 24 per cent of them had undergone more than 10 trainings. This might be because attending of trainings is mandatory for the employees of the department of agriculture. Another possible reason could be that they need to keep themselves abreast with advancement of knowledge, new skills, and various other related technologies. In order to enhance the efficiency of human resources and to improve the capability of staff members, the agriculture department is providing special attention by arranging various training programmes.

Information seeking behavior

The data of Table 1 indicates that most of the trainees (90.70%) had high level of information seeking behaviour, while

only 9.30 per cent belonged to medium level of information seeking behaviour. However there were none in the low category. Most of the trainees were exposed to all mass media. As they were post graduates and their quest for knowledge led them to seek information from different sources like radio, television, news papers, magazines, journals etc. They also search information from internet.

Perceived work load

Majority (80.70%) of the trainees perceived their workload as average, 10.70 per cent of the trainees perceived their workload as light and only 8.70 per cent of the trainees perceived it as heavy (Table 1). This means that employees of the KSDA who attended the trainings are neither overburdened with work nor they are having less work than their capacities. This is a good sign because employees will be able to perform better when they are not burdened by too much work. The seasonal work load and filling up of all the posts in the department could be other reason for the staff to be in a comfortable position.

Training satisfaction

Table 2 shows degree of satisfaction on different aspects of training. More than 90 per cent of trainees were fully satisfied with training atmosphere and break timings during the training. Between 86 - 88 per cent were fully satisfied with facilities provided in the classroom, food & accommodation, preparation of lectures and clarity of presentation. Most of the trainees were partially satisfied with balance of theory-practical ratio (86.00%) and duration of training (81.30%). About 50 per cent were partially satisfied with discussion during training programme and speed of presentation. Few of the trainees were dissatisfied with some of the aspects like balance of theory-practical ratio (2.70%) and field visits (3.30%). The overall satisfaction index was 90.32.

Table 2. Satisfaction of trainees regarding different aspects of foundation course training (n=150)

Aspects of training	Fully satisfied		Partially satisfied		Dissatisfied	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Training atmosphere	139	92.70	11	7.30	-	-
Subject coverage	119	79.30	31	20.70	-	-
Use of teaching aids	122	81.30	28	18.70	-	-
Facilities provided (class room facilities)	133	88.70	17	11.30	-	-
Duration	28	18.70	122	81.30	-	-
Break timings	137	91.30	13	8.70	-	-
Skill orientation	122	81.30	28	18.70	-	-
Balance of theory to practical ratio	17	11.30	129	86.00	04	2.70
Training methodology	124	82.70	26	17.30	-	-
Organization of content	122	81.30	28	18.70	-	-
Preparation of lectures by lecturers	129	86.00	21	14.00	-	-
Clarity of presentation	129	86.00	21	14.00	-	-
Speed of presentation	70	46.70	80	53.30	-	-
Discussion	69	46.00	81	54.00	-	-
Interest creation	114	76.00	36	24.00	-	-
Fields visits	94	62.70	51	34.00	05	3.30
Accommodation and food	130	86.70	20	13.30	-	-
Overall rating of the training	127	84.70	23	15.30	-	-
Overall Satisfaction Index				90.32		

Table 2a. Satisfaction levels of trainees about foundation course training (n=150)

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Low (<30)	-	-
Medium (31 to 42)	17	11.30
High (>42)	133	88.70

Table 2a shows the level of satisfaction and it could be seen that majority of the trainees (88.70%) were highly satisfied with regard to different aspects of training contents. About 11 per cent had medium level of satisfaction and none were in the low satisfaction category. This could be because the Staff Training Unit UAS, Dharwad is well established with good infrastructure facilities like classrooms, good teaching aids, good food & accommodation and transport facility *etc.* The staff of STU and the subject specialists or the resource persons invited to conduct classes are well qualified & knowledgeable. A few of trainees expressed dissatisfied with field visits and theory-practical ratio. Since most of the trainees are basically field level workers in rural areas, they probably felt that more number of practical oriented classes and field visits would have been helpful rather than theory classes. No significant relationship was found between the age, gender, education, total experience, experience in the present post, trainings attended and information seeking behavior with trainees satisfaction about foundation training. (Table 5).

Similar findings were responded by Natikar and Devendrappa (2007) on their study of the trainings conducted by STU Dharwad. They reported that, majority of the trainees were highly satisfied with training aspects.

Usefulness of training topics

It can be observed from the Table 3 that, majority of the trainees *i.e.*, 66 per cent each expressed that the topics of Integrated Pest Management and integrated farming systems

were most useful, followed by extension methods & tools (58.70%) and use of ICT in agriculture (57.30%). Whereas trainings on dairying (87.30%), horticulture crops (85.30%) were perceived as useful, followed by field crops (70.70%) and oilseed & pulse crops (62.70%). Further, it can be seen from the table that more than 90 per cent of the trainees felt that the trainings on fishery and bee-keeping were somewhat useful, followed by sericulture *i.e.* (84.00%). A negligible percentage of the trainees expressed that the training programmes organized on dry farming practices (3.30%), bio-fertilizers (3.30%), extension methods & tools (3.30%) and soil-water-plant relation (3.30%) were somewhat useful. The overall usefulness index was 70.

A look at the data in Table 3a regarding level of usefulness, it could be seen that, majority of the trainees (75.30%) felt that the trainings were of medium level of usefulness. About 23 per cent of the trainees felt that the trainings were highly useful and a meager per cent (1.30%) of the trainees felt that the trainings were not so useful. The knowledge gained through training programmes is very useful because the technologies would be disseminated to the farming community who are the ultimate users of these technologies. Further, IPM, IFS, Organic farming and Soil-water, plant relation techniques / practices would assist the farmers in rendering crop production system more productive, profitable and sustainable. This might be the possible reasons for such results. The results are in line with study of Natikar and Devendrappa (2007) where majority of the trainees expressed that training programmes were most useful.

Extent of information used by trainees after receiving the training

Table 4 depicts the extent information used by the trainees after receiving the training. It is evident that 86.70 per cent of

Table 3. Extent of usefulness of training topics

Training topics	(n=150)					
	Most useful		Useful		Somewhat useful	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Field crops 44	29.30	106	70.70	-	-	-
Oilseed and pulse crops	19	12.70	94	62.70	37	24.70
Horticulture crops	22	14.70	128	85.30	-	-
Dry farming practices	72	48.00	73	48.70	05	3.30
Bio-fertilizers	66	44.00	79	52.70	05	3.30
Sericulture 02	1.30	22	14.70	126	84.00	-
Integrated Pest Management	99	66.00	51	34.00	-	-
Integrated Farming System	99	66.00	51	34.00	-	-
Dairying 10	6.70	131	87.30	09	6.00	-
Fishery 02	1.30	08	5.30	140	93.30	-
Bee-keeping	02	1.30	10	6.70	138	92.00
Earthworm cultivation	13	8.70	34	22.70	103	68.70
Use of ICT in agriculture	86	57.30	64	42.70	-	-
Extension methods & tools	88	58.70	57	38.00	05	3.30
Soil, water and plant relation	80	53.30	65	43.30	05	3.30
Organic farming	86	57.30	64	42.70	-	-
Overall Usefulness Index				70.00		

Usefulness of foundation course and trainees' satisfaction

Table 3a. Level of usefulness of training topics (n=150)

Category	Frequency	Percentage
High (>36)	35	23.30
Medium (27 to 36)	113	75.30
Low (<26)	02	1.30

the trainees had used the knowledge gained by them to the extent of 76-100 per cent. Ten per cent trainees had used the information ranging from 50-75 per cent and only 3.30 per cent had used the information between 26-50 per cent.

The first and foremost reason why the trainees are using the information is that the content of the trainings was planned keeping in view the needs of the trainees and their job mandates. These positive results could be not only because of the course content but also because of the effective delivery by the knowledgeable and experienced staff of the university who have imparted this information.

Conclusion

The overall satisfaction index of 90.32 would indicate that trainees are highly satisfied with foundation course. The study indicated a need to increase the practical classes in relation to theoretical classes. The overall usefulness index of trainees who attended the foundation course training was to the extent of 70.00 per cent, considering the gap of two years between

Table 4. Extent of information used by trainees after receiving the training (n=150)

Category	Frequency	Percentage
0 - 25%	-	-
26- 50%	05	3.30
51- 75%	15	10.00
76- 100% ¹	30	86.70

Table 5. Relationship between independent variables and satisfaction of trainees

Independent variables	Pearson correlation Co-efficient 'r' value
	Trainees (n=150)
Age	0.016 ^{NS}
Gender	-0.173*
Education	-0.056 ^{NS}
Total experience	-0.137 ^{NS}
Experience in the present position	-0.054 ^{NS}
Trainings undergone	0.078 ^{NS}
Information seeking behaviour	-0.036 ^{NS}

* - Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

NS - Non Significant

training and the present study. The study shown that the training was been very effective in terms of satisfaction and usefulness and the effective utilization of the knowledge gained by the trainees during the training.

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