Some factors affecting the Job performance level of Agricultural extension personnel to their extension duties in Dohuk and Sulaimania governorates

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Abstract:

Job performance reviews are extremely important to any organization. Through this process, the organization assesses the worthiness of all its employees. It identifies the employees who need to be trained and motivated to perform better. The Performance of extension worker, like any organizational behavior, influenced by a number of personal , economic, social and psychological variables, and some variables related to the work environment.The main objective of the study was to assess the job performance of extension personnel in Dohuk and Sulaimania governorates in Kurdistan region of Iraq as well as determine the relationships between selected personal characteristics and job performance. The sample of the research consisted of 180 respondents representing 73.2% of extension personnel working in the Agricultural Extension Centers in the two targeted governorates. A personal interview schedule was used for data collection. Percentages, mean scores, and correlation statistic were used in data analysis. The findings of the study indicate that the level of job performance for Extension workers were ranged between law and moderate in Dohuk governorate while ranged between moderate and high in Sulaimania governorate . The findings also indicated that there are a significant relationship between the job performance for Extension workers and (age, sex, years of service in extension , Job stress , participation in training courses and use of information sources) and no significant relationship between Job performance and (level of Education ,specialization , years of practice in Agriculture work and Job satisfaction. Based on the findings of the study, The need to design policies aimed at improving the level of Job performance of Extension personnel in the targeted areas was indicated.

I. Introduction:

In the recent years, more interest is given to rural development programs and projects, because a large proportion of the natural and human resources are concentrated in rural areas, In order to achieve economic and social development, it requires to direct efforts towards rural development [1]. The main objective of rural development is poverty alleviation, Poverty is largely a rural phenomenon, One out of five of the world inhabitants - about 1.2 billion people - live in extreme poverty. 75% of them live in rural areas. The role of agriculture, which is the predominant economic activity in rural areas, is crucial in the Eradication of poverty and food insecurity. The rural poor depend on agriculture for both their incomes and their food entitlements. More generally, in most countries with a high incidence of food insecurity, agriculture is the mainstay of the economy. It accounts for a large share of gross domestic product (GDP), employs a large proportion of the economically active population, represents a major source of foreign exchange and supplies the bulk of basic foods [2]. Agriculture represents one of the most important sectors of the Iraqi economy (including Kurdistan region), and even considered the first sector in view of its role in the Iraqi economy, because this is a sector that provides food to the population, and it lives nearly 30% of the population who are rural residents, it operates approximately 20% of the workforce, Provides the raw materials of Iraqi Industries, As well as the offering of goods for export. Hence the more interest in this sector, its problems and development needed due to the importance of its role in the socio-economic development process of Iraq [3].

Agricultural extension is considered one of the most important instrument responsible for the achievement of agricultural and rural development, it works to improve the standard of living of rural people by overcoming the problems of agricultural production through application of Modern agricultural techniques which are suitable to local environmental conditions.

Because agricultural extension work is concentrated in the function of agricultural extension worker at the local levels where he communicates and coexists with rural people in daily life. So its effectiveness depends on the performance of the local agricultural extension staff working in the villages as they are the direct implementers of extension work at the local level and depend on them the success of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development activities.[4].

If the extension worker is not able to respond to a given situation and function effectively, it does not matter how imaginative the extension approach is or how impressive the supply of inputs and resources for extension work. Indeed, the effectiveness of the extension agent can often determine the success or failure of an extension program [5].The individual's job performance is the real determinant of productivity, the worker who does not have real motives to improve his work or does not have a real commitment to his work will not expect him to a high level of efficiency [6]. Job performance reviews are extremely important to any organization. Through this mechanism, the organization assesses the worthiness of all its employees. It identifies the employees who are its key performers and the employees who need to be trained and motivated to perform better. Also, the organization bases its compensation

benefits on job performance reviews. Performance of extension worker, like any organizational behavior, influenced by a number of personal, economic, social and psychological variables, and some variables related to the work environment, therefore, performance of the extension worker in rural areas is the outcome of the interaction between all these variables and that the average and quality of his work performance is affected by these variables.[7].However, only little empirical literature exists on the roles and performance of extension workers , But there are some previous studies that dealt with the job performance of agricultural extension workers and variables associated with. [8] reported that job performance of the majority of respondents' extension agents 85.4% were ranged between weak and moderate and that there were no significant correlation between the averages of job performance of extension agents and the managerial leadership style or organizational culture type. [9] stated that the job performance of the majority of extension workers respondents in descending order from moderate to low and that the most significant independent variables which affected the degree of professional roles performance were :age, experience in extension work, ability in problems solving and degree of treatment of competition in the work. [10] reported that there is a negative significant relation between the level of job stress and the level of extension workers performance and that the majority of the respondents fell within the medium category of Job performance. Because of the scarcity of studies that dealt with the job performance of agricultural extension workers in Iraq and in Kurdistan region and the factors affecting their performance, it was necessary to conduct this study to determine the level of performance of agricultural extension workers in the agricultural extension centers in the both targeted governorates and factors affecting their performance and therefore working to support the strengthens and treatment of weaknesses and then overcoming the factors hindering the performance of the Extension workers job in the targeted area.

Objectives: This study is designed broadly to determine the level of performance of agricultural extension personnel in the agricultural extension centers in Dohuk and Sulaimania governorates, the specific objectives are To describe some socio-economic characteristics of the Agricultural extension personnel in Dohuk and Sulaimania governorates. and To determine the level of job performance among Agricultural extension personnel in Dohuk and Sulaimania governorates.and To determine the relationship between performance of extension personnel. The targeted area and each of the independent variables (age, sex, years of service in extension, Job stress, participation in training courses and use of information sources, level of Education, specialization, years of practice in Agriculture work and Job satisfaction).

Research hypotheses

To achieve the study objectives, the following null hypothesis were stated and tested: There is no significant relationship between performance of extension workers and each of the independent variables (age, sex, years of service in extension, Job stress, participation in training courses and use of information sources, level of Education, specialization, years of practice in Agriculture work and Job satisfaction).

II. Methodology:

The population of this study is all extension workers that are working at the Agriculture extension centers throughout the Dohuk and Sulaimania governorates, The population for this study consisted of 244 extension workers 189 in Sulaimania and 55 in Dohuk. One hundred and eighty 180 respondents were selected by random sample 49 from Dohuk and 133 from Sulaimania representing 73.2% of the total research population excluding 30 respondents covered by the questionnaire reliability measure. Face and content validity of the instrument was established by the panel of experts, their suggestions were incorporated in the final version of the instrument. Agricultural extension worker job performance was measured on 5-point scale based on the performance dimensions as follows: Very low performance= 1; Low performance= 2; Moderate performance= 3; High performance= 4; Very high performance = 5. , The data were obtained through a carefully prepared and pretested questionnaire and by personal interview. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first part included some personal and occupational characteristic and the second part included a scale consist of 36 items to measure the dependent variable. The data were analyzed statistically using Percentages, mean scores, simple correlation and Spearman Brown coefficient.

III. Result and Discussion:

- Determining the level of job performance among extension workers in Dohuk and Sulaimania governorate. The respondents were calcified into 3 groups according to their level of Job performance :First group included the respondents whose level of job performance was 120 or less 20% of the total respondents.Second category included employees whose degree of need ranged between 121-150. 21.1 %; Third group of those with 15 or more degrees 58.9%.

Table.I: Shows Distribution of Respondents according to the Job performance level.

Classes	Duhok		Sulaymania		Sum	%
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
120 and Less	23	48.9	13	9.8	36	20
121-151	13	27.7	25	18.8	38	21.1
152 and More	11	23.4	95	71.4	106	58.9
Total	47	%100	133	%100	180	%100

Findings of table I indicate overall job performance of respondents in descending order from moderate to high especially in Sulaimania governorate , while in Dohuk the result shows that the job performance of the majority of respondents in descending order from low to moderate . This conforms to 8 and to 10. May be the reason for this is that the high majority of agricultural extension workers in Dohuk governorate 74.5% belong to the low extension experience category (table 6). Thus proper training programs are needed for the extension workers to enhance their skills in the professional and technical competencies.

- Determining the relationship between performance of the agriculture extension personnel in the targeted area and each of the independent variables:

A. Age:

Age is considered as one of the important personal characteristics that influence the level of performance of the agricultural extension workers to their extension duties. The result reveals that majority of the extension workers 54.4% are within the age range of 24-36 years. They are followed by 23..9% who falls within the age bracket of 50 years 0r more while 21.7 % of the respondents were between the ages categories of 37-49 years old. This implies that majority of the extension workers are young and active, hence, they are expected to be alert to their duties as change agents.

Table.II: Shows Distribution of Respondents according to Age

Classes	Duhok		Sulymania		Frequency	%	Simple correlation (r)
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%			
24-36	18	38,30	80	60,15	98	54.4	
37-49	9	19,15	30	22,55	39	21.7	
50 and More	20	42,55	23	17,30	43	23.9	0.275 **
Total	47	%100	133	%100	180	%100	

The result in Table II shows that at 0.5% level of significance, the research hypothesis (Ho2) that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and age is rejected (r= 0.275. This suggests that there is a significant positive relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and their age. This implies that agricultural extension workers job performance in the study area increases with increase in their age and vice versa, may the reason is that the respondents acquire more information and needed skills whenever they penetrated into the Age. This conforms to [9].

B. Gender:

As shown in the table III the ratio of male agriculture extension workers in the two governorates Dohuk and Sulaimania is 62.8% while the female extension workers are 37.2% of the total respondents

Table.III: Shows Distribution of Respondents according to Gender

Classes	Duhok		Sulymania		Sum	%	Spearman Brown. (r)
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%			
Male	37	78,72	76	57.14	113	62.8	
Female	10	21,28	57	42.86	67	32.7	0.318 **
Total	47	%100	133	%100	180	%100	

The results in Table III indicate that at 1% level of significance, the research hypothesis (Ho2) that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and gender variable is rejected. This suggests that there is a significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and the gender variable (Spearman Brown coefficient r = 0.318). May be the reason is that extension work needs a great physical efforts to female can not do in all cases. This result conforms to [11].

C. Level of Education:

The table IV shows the majority of the agriculture extension workers in the both targeted governorates (51.7%) have B.Sc.,26.7% of the respondents have Secondary School, 20% have Diploma in agriculture , with just little (3.6%) having high certificates .This implies that the largest proportion of extension workers in the both governorates of Duhok and Sulaimani are Colleges of Agriculture graduates. This can be a good indicator to be used in promoting and upgrading Agriculture extension centers programs and rural development activities.

Table.IV: Shows Distribution of Respondents according to their level of Education. .

Classes	Duhok		Sulymania		Sum	%	Simple correlation (r)
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%			
Agri. Secondary School	12	25.53	36	27.07	48	26.7	
Agri. Institution	5	10.46	31	23.30	36	20	
Agri. College	27	57.45	66	49.63	93	51.17	0.106
Higher Study	3	6.38	0	00	3	1.6	
Total	47	%100	133	%100	180	%100	

The result in Table IV shows that at 0.5% level of significance, the research hypothesis (Ho2) that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and level of education is accepted (r= 0.106). This suggests that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and their level of Education .May be the reason is that the majority of the respondents (74.45%) are newly graduated and have belong to the low extension experience category , This result conforms to [12].

D. Specialization:

The Table V shows that the percentage of respondents who specialize in Agriculture extension is 3.9 % and non-Extension specialists 96.1%. This implies that the vast majority of the respondents are not Extension specialists, which reflects the extent of their need to in-service training courses to acquire basic skills and information for doing their assignments.

Table.V: Shows Distribution of Respondents according to Specialization

Classes	Duhok		Sulimanya		Sum	%	Spearman Brown (r)
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%			
Specialist Agri. Extension	3	6.38	4	3	7	3.9	
Non Specialist Agri. Extension	44	93.62	129	96.9	173	96.1	-0.131
Total	47	%100	133	%100	180	%100	

The Table V shows that at 0.5% level of significance, the research hypothesis (Ho2) that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and Specialization is accepted (Spearman Brown coefficient .r= 0.131).This suggests that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and their Specialization. May be the reason is that the majority of the respondents 96.1% are non-Extension specialists.

Extension experience:

The length of service is probably an indicator of a person's commitment to the chosen career. Frequent training and re-training programs are needed to be put in place by an organization to strengthen this commitment [13].

Table.VI: Shows Distribution of Respondents according to Extension experience.

Classes	Duhok		Sulymania		Sum	%	Simple correlation (r)
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%			
1-7 Short Services	35	74.5	74.5	74.45	134	74.4	
8-14 Mid Services	10	21.25	21.25	22.25	40	22.3	
15 and More Long Services	2	4.25	4.25	30	6	3.3	0.640
Total	47	%100	%100	%100			

The results of table VI indicate that 134 respondents 74.4% have extension experience between 1-7 years, and 40 respondents (22.3%) have experience of 8 – 14 years in extension services, 6 respondents 3.3% have experience of above 15 years. The results indicate that the largest proportion of extension workers falls within the low extension experience category, therefore, training in every aspect of social and scientific discipline is required. May be the reason that the majority of the extension workers are newly graduated and have joint to extension organization recently. The results in Table 6 indicate that at 1% level of significance, the research hypothesis (Ho2) that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and extension experience variable is rejected (r=0.640). This suggests that there is a significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and the extension experience variable, may be the reason is that the respondents acquire more information and experience in dealing with educational situations whenever the years of extension work increased.

E. Years of employment:

Table VII indicates that 66.6% of the respondents in the both targeted governorates had 1-12 years of job experience followed by 13-24 and 25 or more years of job experience as reported by 16.2 and 17.2% of the respondents respectively.

Table.VII: Shows Distribution of Respondents according to Years of employment

Classes	Duhok		Sulymania		Sum	%	Simple correlation (r)
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%			
1-12 Short Services	32	68.09	88	74.45	120	66.6	0.275
13-24 Mid Services	2	4.25	27	22.25	29	16.2	
25 and More Long Services	13	25.66	18	30	31	17.2	
Total	47	%100	133	%100	180		

From the results it is clear that the overwhelming majority of the respondents fell within the low job experience category, may be the reason is that they are newly appointed to job. Table VII depict that at 1% level of significance, the research hypothesis (Ho2) that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and job experience variable is rejected (r=0.275). This suggests that there is a significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and the job experience variable, The reason is That increase in the years of job employment may increase Job expertise and will lead to the accumulation of knowledge and understanding the nature of the extension work more and thus raises the level of the extension workers performance to their tasks.

F. Years of practice in agriculture work:

Table VIII reveal that the rate of respondents who worked in the field of agriculture before joining the extension job in the two targeted governorates of Dahuk and Sulaymaniyah is 14.89%, while the rate of respondents who do not work in the field of agriculture before joining the extension job is 85.11%. This implies that the vast majority of the extension workers in the both governorates do not work in the field of agriculture before joining the job.

Table VIII: Shows Distribution of Respondents according to Years of practice in Agriculture work

Classes	Duhok		Sulymania		Sum	%	Spearman Brown (r)
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%			
Professional	7	14,89	33	24.81	40	22.2	
Non Professional	40	85,11	100	75.19	140	77.8	0.116
Total	47	%100	133	%100	180	100	

The result in Table VIII shows that at 0.5% level of significance, the research hypothesis (Ho2) that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and Years of practice in agriculture work is accepted (Spearman Brown coefficient r= 0.116). This suggests that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and Years of practice in agriculture work. May be the reason is that the majority of the respondents did not practice in the field of agriculture before joining the job in the two provinces of Dahuk and Sulaymaniyah.

G. Training:

Table IX, indicate that 27.8% of respondents (10.9%) did not attend any training during the service , and 45.1% of respondents reported that they attended training between (1-30) days, only 27.1% of respondents attended 31 days or more training. This implies that the largest proportion of respondents did not participate in any training or have weak participation, which reflects a clear deficiency in the number of trainings provided for the extension workers in the targeted areas.

Table IX: Shows Distribution of Respondents according to Training

Classes	Duhok		Sulymania		(r)
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	
Non Training	6	12.8	37	27,8	
1-30 Days	25	53.2	60	45.1	
31Days and more	16	34	36	27.1	**0.229
Total	47	%100	133	%100	

The result reveals that at 0.5% level of significance, the research hypothesis (Ho2) that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and participation in training is rejected (Spearman Brown coefficient r = 0.229). This suggests that there is a significant positive relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and training. This implies that agricultural extension workers job performance in the study area increases with increase in their participation in the training courses and vice versa , may the reason is that The reason for this is that the training is one of the factors affecting the performance of the agricultural extension workers for their extension tasks by configuring appropriate intellectual and practical habits and acquisition of knowledge and skills which lead to improvement in their levels performance and raise their morale [14].

H. Sources of information:

The agriculture extension workers are divided into three categories according to their using of information sources (High, Mid. and low). Table 10, reveal that the largest proportion of the respondent 68.1% fell within the mid category, they are followed by 24.8% of the respondent who fell within the high category and the rest of the respondent (7.1%) fell within the low category of using the agriculture information sources.

Table.X : Shows Distribution of Respondents according to Source of information

Classes	Duhok		Sulymania		Simple correlation (r)
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	
10-15 Little Resources	10	21,27	80	60,15	0.202**
16-21 Mid Resources	33	70,21	46	34,59	
High Resources	4	8,52	7	5,26	
Total	47	%100	133	%100	

The results in Table x indicate that at 1% level of significance, the research hypothesis (Ho2) that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and degree of information resource use variable is rejected (r=0.202). This suggests that there is a significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and the degree of their using of information sources. May be is that the more numerous and varied sources of information used by extension workers will help them to the large amount of useful knowledge and extension experience and thus enable them to perform their work efficiently [15].

I. Job satisfaction:

Weaknesses in the performance of agricultural extension workers may be due to several factors, including the weak or lack of satisfaction extension workers for their job , Job satisfaction is one of the key elements of public satisfaction of an individual , which enables him to the performance his tasks and continue with its (18). Respondents were distributed according to their degree of satisfaction with their work into three categories of (low, medium and high).

Table XI: Shows Distribution of Respondents according to Job satisfaction

Classes	Duhok		Sulymania		Sum	%	Simple correlation (r)
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%			
12-20 Low Satisfy	3	6,38	10	7.51	7.51	7.2	0.062
21-28 Mid Satisfy	35	74,47	65	48,88	48,88	55.6	
29-36 High Satisfy	9	19,15	58	43,61	43,61	37.2	
Total	47	%100	133	%100	%100	100	

Table XI results indicate that 55.6% of the extension workers in the two targeted governorates fell within the medium category . 37.2% within the high category , and 7.2% within the low category of job satisfaction .The results reveal that at 0.5% level of significance, the research hypothesis (Ho2) that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and job satisfaction is accepted (r= 0.062). This suggests that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and job satisfaction. May be the reason is that the vast majority of respondents are new graduated and not specialized in agriculture and still have not made up a clear vision about their Extension work.

J. Job Stress:

The Job stress has become one of the serious diseases that could threaten all employees, It is one of the characteristic of this era, is likely to affect the agricultural extension workers and thus affect negatively on their performance level.

Table XII: Shows Distribution of Respondents according to Job stress

Classes	Duhok		Sulymania		Sum	%	Simple correlation (r)
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%			
16-31 Low Work Pressure	9	19,15	8	6,01	17	9.4	
32-47 Mid Work Pressure	29	61,70	30	22,56	59	32.8	
48-64 High Work Pressure	9	19,15	95	71,43	104	57.8	0.499**
Total	47	%100	133	%100	180	%100	

Table XII, indicate that (57.8%) of the extension workers in the both governorates reported that they suffer from high job stress. 32.8% reported that they suffer from medium job stress ,while 9.4% suffer from low job stress . This implies that the majority of the respondents fell in the high job stress category. Table XII depict that at 1% level of significance, the research hypothesis (Ho2) that there is no significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and job stress variable is rejected (r= -0.49). This suggests that there is a negative significant relationship between agricultural extension workers job performance and the job stress variable, May be the reason is that increased job stress raises a lot of negative influences and situations which are such problems and difficulties faced by extension workers and thus influence their performance to extension tasks. This result conforms to [10].

Recommendations:

Based on the findings and conclusion reached in this study, it is therefore recommended that:

- The study results indicate to clear deficiency in the number of training courses attended by agricultural extension workers in the both governorates Dohuk and Suliamania ,which reflect the need for intensive training courses to raise the efficiency of agricultural extension workers in order to keep up with the continuous technological changes.
- Training needs analysis should be carried out for new recruits and also
Periodically to determine the extension workers training needs on different technical and communicational aspects

- It is necessary to take the distinctive characteristics of extension workers into consideration when choosing and recruiting new extension workers, as e it is one of the factors influencing the level of their performance to extension duties .
- It is necessary for Agriculture extension responsible taking into account the variables (age, gender, service in extension work, career service, years of practice in Agriculture work before the service, Job stress), they are the most important factors affecting the level of performance of extension workers to their duties.
- Conducting similar researches in other provinces in Kurdistan and Iraq in general in order to prepare an effective strategy for the improvement of the extension workers performance in Kurdistan region and Iraq.

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