

## A SCALE TO MEASURE THE ATTITUDE OF AGRO-INPUT DEALERS TOWARDS THEIR OCCUPATION

Dhruv Patel<sup>1</sup>, G. N. Thorat<sup>2</sup> and J. K. Patel<sup>3</sup>

1 Ph.D. Scholar, Dept. of Agricultural Extension and Communication, AAU, Anand-388110

2 Assistant professor, Institute of Distance Education Anand, AAU, Anand-388110

3 Director, Extension Education Institute, AAU, Anand-388110

E-mail; dp.nnzz@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

*In India, agro-input dealers play a crucial indirect role in enhancing farm productivity and income. Due to their locational advantage and easy accessibility, they serve as important sources of agricultural information, offering guidance on technologies, recommendations, and input supply, contributing to farmers' decision-making processes. This study was conducted to develop a valid and reliable statements to be used for measuring attitude of agro-input dealers towards their occupation. The scale-product method is used to develop the scale. This method is a combination of Likert and Thurston technique. 28 statements were assessed by 50 judges on a 5 point continuum. Then, after comparing S and Q value 16 statements were selected to form a scale to measure attitude towards occupation. The reliability coefficient (r) was determined to be 0.86, indicating reliability, using the split-half method. A questionnaire- based proportionate random sampling survey was conducted on 120 agro-input dealers in Anand district of Gujarat state. The statistical measures, such as SPSS and Microsoft excel were used and nearly two- third (67.50 per cent) of the agro-input dealers had favourable attitude towards their occupation.*

**Keywords:** attitude, reliability, proportionate, occupation and agro-input dealers

### INTRODUCTION

India's economy is based on agriculture, which plays a crucial role in the country's economic growth. As of now, 72.00 per cent of the country's population lives in rural areas and 60.00 per cent of its workforce is employed in agriculture. Agricultural development is aided by agricultural research and extension. For agriculture to flourish sustainably, it is critical to have an effective extension system capable of timely distribution of need-based farm technology among rural communities. Farmers are now required to adopt a wider range of agro-inputs and practices and develop skills for their more efficient use. In modernizing agriculture, the mechanism of technology transfer from research stations to farmers has been critical.

The input dealers play an important role in several aspects of agricultural development at the grass-root level by dissemination of knowledge about new technologies and new recommendations (Kalasariya et al., 2022).

Agro-input dealers provide seeds, chemical fertilizer, bio-fertilizers, agricultural chemicals, machinery, implements, plant protection appliances, animal feed, poultry hatchery, landscaping, agricultural credit and customer service, bio-control units, biotech units, bio-pesticides, etc.

In this context with their locational advantage, same situation and easy access input dealers efficiently became the most important source of agricultural information to the farmers (Madhu et al., 2022). There is a lack of sufficient field level staff and the apparent absence of systematic dissemination of important information regarding appropriate cropping patterns, inputs, cultivation practices and many more. Credit availability, quality of the product, availability of preferred brand, price of the product and malpractices significantly influenced the dealer's loyalty among farmers. Thus, it was necessary to understand the attitude of agro-input dealers towards their occupation so that necessary remedial measures can be helpful to them to run their business smoothly and serve to farmers efficiently (Padmanabhan, 1999).

### OBJECTIVES

- (1) To develop the scale to measure attitude of agro-input dealers towards their occupation
- (2) To study the attitude of agro-input dealers towards their occupation

### METHODOLOGY

Attitude refers to the degree of positive or negative effects of an individual associated with some psychological object (Thurstone, 1946; Sherin et al., 2023).

Development of attitude scale to measure the degree of positive or negative feelings of the agro-input dealers towards their occupation, a scale was developed by adopting systematic methodology. Among the techniques available, researcher had selected. 'Scale product method' which combines the Turnstone's technique of equal appearing interval scale (1928) for selection of items and Likert's technique of summated rating (1932) for ascertaining the response on the scale as proposed by Eysenck and Crown (1949) and also as followed by Patel et al. (2022).

**Steps in development of attitude scale**

**Item collection**

The item making up for perception scale are known as statement. According to Edwards (1957) statement may be defined as anything that is said about a psychological object. Initially, 40 items were prepared by using relevant literatures and experts opinions. On basis of the criteria suggested by Edward and Kilpatrick (1948) the ambiguity were eliminated by editing and finally 28 statements were selected as they were found to be non-ambiguous.

**Judge's rating on attitudinal statements**

To judge the degree of 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree' of each statement on the five-point equal appearing interval continuum, a panel of 50 judges was selected. The judges selected for the study comprised extension educationists from Anand Agricultural University and other universities. The judges were visited personally with a letter of instructions or mail for rating the statements in the desired manner.

**Determination of scale and quartile values**

The inter-quartile range ( $Q = Q^3 - Q^1$ ) for each statement was also worked out. Only those statements were selected whose median values were greater than Q value. When a few statements had the same scale values, the statements having lowest Q Values were selected. Thurstone and Chave (1946) described another criterion in addition to Q

as a basis for rejecting statement in scales constructed by the method of the equal appearing interval. Accordingly, when a few items had the same scale values, the item having lowest Q Values were selected. With this same manner, a scale to measure the attitude of agro-input dealers towards their occupation was developed.

**Reliability of scale**

A scale is reliable if it consistently produces the same results when applied to the same sample. In the present study, split-half method of testing reliability was used. The 16 statements were divided into two halves with 8 odd numbered in one half and 8 even-numbered statements in the other. These were administered to 20 agro-input dealers. Each of the two sets of statements was treated as a separate scale and then these two sub-scales were correlated. The co-efficient of reliability was calculated by the Rulon's formula (Guilford, 1954), which came to be 0.86. Thus, the scale developed was found highly reliable.

**Validity of scale**

The validity of the scale was examined for content validity by determining how well the content of the scale represented the domain subject matter under study. Since as many items covering the area as possible were selected by discussion with experts, reviewing the literature and adherence to the judges' ratings, it was presumed that the instrument satisfied the content validity.

**Scoring technique**

Against each of 16 statements there were five columns, representing a five-point continuum of agreement or disagreement to the statements as followed by Likert (1932). The points on continuum were strongly agreed, agree and disagree with weight of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively for positive statements and reverse scoring for negative statement to know level of the agro-input dealers attitude towards their occupation. Score of each statement will be summed up by using arbitrary method.

**Table 1: Final statement for the attitude scale**

Sr. No.	Statements	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
1	Agro-input enterprise is playing a vital role in the agricultural development. (+)					
2	I think that input dealing enterprise required high initial investment. (-)					
3	I never discriminate the farmers whether rich/poor. (+)					
4	I feel that legal procedure for licence of agro-input enterprise is tedious. (-)					
5	Input dealer disseminate scientific knowledge to upgrade standard of living of farmers. (+)					

Sr. No.	Statements	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
6	Quality control officers have negative attitude toward agro-input enterprise. (-)					
7	Input dealers sell inputs on credit to needy farmers those who are confident to repayment. (+)					
8	Non availability of quality input is a problem in agro-input enterprise. (-)					
9	Establishment of agro service centers has ensured availability of modern agricultural machinery at village level. (+)					
10	Agro-input enterprise in selling subsidised product is difficult as government delays in reimbursing the money. (-)					
11	Agro-input enterprise failed to fulfil the all services to the farmers. (-)					
12	I have strong faith in agro-input enterprise. (+)					
13	I place profit first than services. (-)					
14	Input dealer have to face tough competition. (-)					
15	The farmer believes more the Agro-input dealers rather than the neighbors. (+)					
16	I believe nowadays agro enterprise is more remunerative than others. (+)					
SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, UD= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree						

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overall attitude of agro-input dealers towards their occupation is the degree of positive or negative feelings associated with respondent's behaviour towards occupation. The data regarding attitude of agro-input dealers towards their occupation is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Distribution of agro-input dealers according their attitude towards occupation (n = 120)**

Sr. No.	Categories	Frequency	Per cent
1	<b>Strongly unfavourable (16.00 to 28.80 score)</b>	00	00.00
2	<b>Unfavourable (28.81 to 41.60 score)</b>	01	00.83
3	<b>Neutral (41.61 to 54.40 score)</b>	28	23.34
4	<b>Favourable (54.41 to 67.20 score)</b>	81	67.50
5	<b>Strongly favourable (67.21 to 80 score)</b>	10	08.33

### Attitude of agro-input dealers towards their occupation

The data given in Table 2 revealed that majority (67.50 per cent) of the respondents had favourable attitude towards their occupation followed by 23.33 per cent of them had neutral, 8.33 per cent of them had strongly favourable. A few (0.83 percent) of input dealers had unfavourable attitude towards their occupation.

Thus, it can be disclosed that the vast majority of agro-input dealers had a favorable attitude toward their occupation. The probable reason for these individuals who choose to become agro-input dealers may have a genuine interest in agriculture and a passion for serving farmers and more income earning in short time. This intrinsic motivation can contribute to a positive attitude towards their occupation. The outcome of the study is in conformity with the findings of Chaudhry (2012), and Khambhala (2020).

## CONCLUSION

The attitude scale developed was found to be reliable and valid. The attitude scale developed was administered on 120 agro-input dealers of a sample area, it can be concluded that the scale developed was useful in measuring the attitude of agro-input dealers towards their occupation. Hence, researcher can use this scale in future for measuring the attitude of agro-input dealers in similar studies.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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