

A SCALE TO MEASURE THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS PRIVATIZATION OF EXTENSION SERVICES

R. D. Pandya¹

ABSTRACT

The present study was taken up to develop a scale to measure attitude towards privatization of extension services. The final format of the scale to measure attitude of the researchers, extension workers and farmers towards privatization of extension services consisted of the 20 statements. It is statistically inferred that the judges/experts were equally consistent about the content/subject of the present study. The validity and reliability of the scale were highly significant.

While executing the scale to the 200 respondents of all the three strata, it was found that majority of researchers, extension workers and farmers possessed medium level of favourable attitude towards privatization of extension services.

INTRODUCTION

Attitude scales have been proved to be useful tools to measure the attitude of large number of individual towards specific areas. Attitude is a state of readiness or a tendency to react in a certain manner. It is a universally accepted fact that the attitude of an individual plays an important role to determine the behaviour with respect to a psychological object. Attitude of an individual for an object is always present but remains dormant most of the time. It is expressed in speech or through other behaviour only when the object of the attitude is perceived. An instrument that stimulates people to express their attitude can be termed as an attitude scale. There is no limit to the topics about which people may have attitude. Hence, it can be persuasively argued that everything in life depends on attitudes. So, a study of an attitude is important in various fields.

Klineberg (1954) gave five dimensions of an attitude as direction, degree, intensity, consistency and salience. In this study an

attitude was conceptualized as respondent's degree of favourable or unfavourable attitude towards a psychological object i.e. privatization of extension services. Attitude towards privatized extension services will be an important factor in the 21st century for the development of agricultural. Gross (1977) concluded that the farmers had favourable attitude towards extension and its agricultural services. Westermarck (1987) stated that the consultancy services had changed the attitude of users towards agriculture and advisory services. In India too, with the implementation of extension reforms, public-private partnership has been given due importance. It has been assumed in this study that attitude of farmers towards privatization of extension services will help to design a suitable extension strategy for selected enterprises of this area.

METHODOLOGY

As a corollary of this and non availability of suitable scale, the investigator inspired to develop a standardized scale to measure

¹ Professor, Department of Extension Education, N. M. College of Agriculture, NAU, Navsari

the attitude of researchers, extension workers and farmers towards privatization of extension services. Considering the capacity of summated rating technique to measure the broadness, value and intensity of the study area, the investigator resorted to this method to construct the scale as suggested by Likert (1932) and Edward (1969) with a slight modification in the procedure.

Collection of statements

The items of the attitude scale were called statements. Initially, 54 statements representing the attitude of researchers, extension workers and farmers towards privatization of extension services were constructed. Finally, 43 statements were scrutinized for judges' views by Edwards' technique.

Methods of statement analysis

All 43 statements were converted into a schedule. These were mailed to a panel of 100 judges/experts drawn from various agricultural universities as well as innovative farmers and personnel of non government organizations of south Gujarat with necessary instructions to evaluate each of the statements critically as to its relevance to measure attitude towards privatization of extension services. They were requested to give response on a five point continuum ranging from most relevant, relevant, undecided, less relevant and irrelevant with assigning scores of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively. For negative statements the scoring system was reversed.

In all 80 judges/experts responded in time. The statements wise scores of each expert were arranged in the descending order to obtain the highest and lowest quartiles.

Each statement of quartiles contained responses of 20 experts. The higher and lower quartiles were used as criterion group to evaluate individual/each statement. For each statement, 't' value was calculated by using the formula as suggested by Edward (1969). The 't' value of 43 statements were found significant which statistically inferred that the experts were equally consistent about the content/subject of each statement of the schedule. Finally, as stated by Edward (1969), all significant 't' values were ranked in order and the first 20 statements with the largest 't' value were selected for incorporation in the attitude scale.

Validity of the statement

The validity of a scale is a property that the obtained test score measures the variables they are supposed to measure. All the 't' values of 20 statements were significant which inferred that the statements of the attitude scale had discriminating value to measure the attitude of researchers, extension workers and farmers towards privatization of extension services.

Reliability of the scale

The reliability of the scale was tested by the split half method. The odd numbered and even numbered statements were separated and two sets were made. The agreement between the two sets of scores on each half of the scale was determined by using the formula of Pearson Product Moment correlation which was found highly significant (0.97**). From the reliability of the split half test, the self correlation of the whole test was established by the Spearman Brown formula. The reliability coefficient being as high as 0.98, the reliability of the attitude scale was assured.

Administering the scale

Ex-post facto research design with two stage simple random sampling was employed to select the villages and farmers of south Gujarat, where the majority had adopted paddy, sapota, rose, animal husbandry and inland fishing. Farmers from five villages were randomly selected for paddy, sapota and animal husbandry and seven villages for rose and inland fishing. There were 20 statements in the final format, which were administered to the researchers, extension workers and farmers to measure the attitude towards privatization of extension services. A five point continuum scale was used. The scores assigned for the positive statement was 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for undecided, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. The scoring for the negative statement was just the reverse. The favourable or unfavourable response for the statements was judged at the time of interview with respondents by posing cross questions before arriving at the conclusion. For ascertaining the nature of attitude, the maximum and minimum scores of respondents were taken in to consideration, which were 100 and 20, respectively. The list of researchers and extension workers who are directly engaged in selected enterprises were obtained from the Navsari zone of Gujarat Agricultural University and line departments of Gujarat State, respectively. In all 200 as sample size for the study was made by selecting 10 researchers, 10 extension workers and 20 farmers for each of the five selected enterprises. The scale developed was utilized to collected data were analyzed by applying appropriate statistical tools.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

An attitude scale on privatization of extension services

The final format of the scale, prepared as a result of the foresaid procedure, is displayed as Table 1.

Attitude towards privatization of extension services

Attitude may be thought of as predisposition to act, perceive, think and feel in relation to some thing. The feelings of researchers, extension workers and farmers were collected and grouped as; (i) low level of favourable attitude (below 50.25 score), (ii) medium level of favourable attitude (between 50.26 to 75.45 score) and high level of favourable attitude (above 75.45 score). The data in this respect are presented in Table 2.

The data of table 2, revealed that, majority of the researchers (80.0 per cent), extension workers (50.0 per cent) and farmers (66.0 per cent) possessed medium level of favorable attitude towards privatization of extension services. Where as, 20.0, 48.0 and 31.0 per cent of them possessed low, medium and high level of favorable attitude towards privatization of extension services respectively.

In general, majority of them (65.5 per cent) possessed medium level of favorable attitude towards privatization of extension services, followed by 18.5 per cent had low level of favorable attitude towards privatization of extension services. The probable reasons for higher proportion of respondents with medium level of favorable attitude towards privatization of extension services might be due to timely supply of required information and high quality input with high satisfactory level.

Table 1. Final format of the attitude scale to measure the attitude towards privatization of extension services

Sr.	Item nos.	Final statements	Scale value
1	3(-)	In present situation private extension services in our profession is futile exercise?	27.43
2	1(+)	Private extension services have increased the employment opportunities to the people in rural areas.	26.05
3	6(-)	Government extension services are more advantageous than private extension services.	22.06
4	2(+)	Personnel of private extension services are very flexible in implementing the policies	20.10
5	10(+)	An individual is always eager to know about modern practices through the private extension services.	19.77
6	34(-)	The private extension services are not appropriate to influence the users to adopt the technology.	19.71
7	43(+)	Private extension services are very cheap.	19.44
8	21(-)	Private extension services have failed to provide financially feasible technologies.	19.30
9	12(+)	An individual has more confidence in private extension services for the development of profession.	18.84
10	7(-)	Required inputs are not supplied regularly to the users by the private extension services.	18.64
11	13(-)	In the name of privatization, we are blindly following western thoughts which are not suitable to our situation.	18.49
12	24(+)	Personnel of private extension services visit regularly to the same users.	18.29
13	28(-)	The private extension services have failed to prove their aims to the extent to which they announced.	18.12
14	27(+)	The private extension services fulfill the needs of small and marginal farmers.	18.04
15	40(+)	Government should motivate the farmers to adopt the technologies of private agencies.	18.00
16	23(-)	Private extension services are made the recommendations with out considering the availability of inputs.	17.98
17	33(+)	Personnel of private extension services are capable to solve the users' problems in time.	17.98
18	14(+)	Social status of users has increased due to the private extension services.	17.86
19	26(-)	The visiting period of personnel of private extension services are not sufficient to solve the day to day problems.	17.86
20	16(+)	As a beneficiary, I always get proper guidance from the private extension services.	17.84

Table 2 : Distribution of researchers, extension workers and farmers according to their level of attitude

Level of Attitude	Researchers		Extension workers		Farmers		Pooled	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Low attitude	10	20.0	24	48.0	3	03.0	37	18.5
Medium attitude	40	80.0	25	50.0	66	66.0	131	65.5
High attitude	00	00.0	1	02.0	31	31.0	32	16.0
Total	50	100.0	50	100.0	100	100.0	200	100.0

CONCLUSION

The final format of the scale to measure attitudes of the researchers, extension workers and farmers towards privatization of extension services consisted of the 20 statements. It is statistically inferred that the judges/experts were equally consistent about the content/subject of the present study. The validity and reliability of the scale were highly significant.

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REFERENCE

Pandya R. D. (1998). 'A study on the privatization of extension services in south Gujarat', Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, GAU, Navsari.