

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Socio-personal, Professional and Psychological characteristics of Agricultural University Teachers: A study in Assam Agricultural University

S. Marbaniang¹, P. Mishra² and B.L. Khuhly^{2*}

¹Subject Matter Specialist, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Meghalaya;

²Dept. of Extension Education, Faculty of Agriculture, AAU, Jorhat, Assam, India
nkhuhy@gmail.com*; +91 8811871664

Abstract

The study was conducted at the College of Agriculture (Jorhat) and Biswanath College of Agriculture (Sonitpur) under Assam Agricultural University. A total of 70 teachers were selected by using a proportionate random sampling design. The data were collected by administering structured questionnaires. Statistical analysis was done by using percentage, frequency, mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, chi-square test and Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation for interpreting the data. A total of ten characteristics were selected viz. age, gender, education, rank, service length, preference for teaching as a profession, attitude towards University, job satisfaction, achievement motivation and role conflict categorized as socio-personal, professional and psychological variables. The study revealed that majority of the teachers was males (81.43%) aged between 43-54 years (65.71%) with a Ph.D. (95.72%) degree. In the professional characteristics, most of the teachers were professors with medium service length and majority (58.57%) of them had first preference for teaching as a profession. In terms of psychological characteristics, the teachers had favorable (80.00%) attitude towards the university, medium level of achievement motivation (60.00%), role conflict (75.72%) and a good majority (68.57%) of the teachers were satisfied with their job.

Keywords: Socio-personal, professional, psychological characteristics, teachers, achievement motivation.

Introduction

Teachers are an integral and most important part of a University. The responsibility that the Agricultural University have in producing and nurturing more quality technical hand to help the farming community of the country is fulfilled by the teachers in the University through their dedication in teaching, research and extension. The quality of agricultural education depends ultimately on the quality of the people who provide it. Several researches have studied teachers' performance and the factors that had contributed to their effective performance. Boyce (1912) and Anderson (1954), in separate studies, found that there were no significant differences between men and women teachers in regard to teaching success. In another study conducted by Debnath (1971), it was reported that some important determinants of teaching efficiency found that age, experience, academic achievement and training are significantly related to teaching efficiency. Miller *et al.* (1989) reported that effective agriculture teachers were found to be older than the average agriculture teacher and possessed more teaching experience. Research conducted by Liu *et al.* (2010) revealed that educators who have a master's degree are aware of and understand more about educational practices than those who have a bachelor's degree. The more years of teaching experience the educators had, the more knowledge and understanding they had about educational practice.

Considering all these reports, the present study was undertaken to find out the socio-personal, professional and psychological characteristics of the teachers and to find out to what extent these characteristics have an influence on their effectiveness.

Materials and methods

Study area: The study was conducted at the College of Agriculture (Jorhat) and Biswanath College of Agriculture (Sonitpur) under the Assam Agricultural University.

Experimental design: A total of 70 teachers were selected for the study by using a proportionate random sampling design. The data were collected by administering structured questionnaires. A total of ten characteristics were selected viz. age, gender, education, rank, service length, preference for teaching as a profession, attitude towards University, job satisfaction, achievement motivation and role conflict categorized as socio-personal, professional and psychological variables.

Statistical analysis: Statistical analysis was done using percentage, frequency, mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, chi-square test and Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation were used for interpreting the data.

Results and discussion

Age: Majority (65.71%) of the teachers were in the age group of 43-54 years followed by 20.00% in the age group above 54 years and 14.28% in the age group below 43 years (Table 1). The low percentage of younger teachers with respect to the older ones may be due to the reason that recruitment of teachers is not done regularly to fill up the positions which are left vacant after the retirement of teachers or promotion of teachers to higher rank.

Gender: Majority (81.43%) of the teachers was male and 18.57% were females (Table 2). This shows that the turnout of qualified females from the university was comparatively very low with that of their male counterpart. This can be explained by the fact that in the initial years of establishment of the College of Agriculture, mostly male students were admitted.

Education: As seen from Table 3, majority (95.72%) of the teachers had a Ph.D. degree while only a mere 4.28% of the teachers had a M.Sc. degree. Although the minimum educational qualification for a teacher to be recruited is a M.Sc. degree, the results show that the teachers have fulfilled this criterion. This may be due to the fact that opportunities for further studies are more available to the teachers.

Rank: Table 4 reveals that 60.00% of the teachers were in the rank of professor followed by associate professor (31.43%) and assistant professor (8.57%). This could be because most of the teachers in the rank of Professor are in the AAU headquarters and the other teachers with different rank are appointed in the out stations. There is also a lack of teachers belonging to the assistant professor rank due to some recent promotion to the higher ranks.

Service length: It is evident from Table 5 that a majority (72.85%) of the teachers has served in the University for a medium period of 15-29 years while 20.00% of them served for a long period (>29 years) and 7.15% for a short period of less than 15 years.

Preference for teaching as a profession: Majority (58.57%) of the teachers had a first preference for teaching as a profession followed by 34.28% of the teachers having second preference and a mere 4.28% and 2.85% having third and fourth preference respectively (Table 6).

It is worth noting that although majority of the teachers prefer teaching yet healthy signs are there that research too is not neglected by the teachers. However, the low preferences for extension and administration are a cause of concern which may be due to the fact that teachers feel these roles are hindering their primary teaching roles.

Table 1. Distribution of teachers according to age.

Category range (Years)	Teachers (n=70)	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<43	10	14.28
43-54	46	65.71
>54	14	20.00

Table 2. Distribution of teachers according to gender.

Gender	Teachers (n=70)	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	57	81.43
Female	13	18.57

Table 3. Distribution of teachers according to education.

Education	Teachers (n=70)	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
M. Sc.	3	4.28
Ph. D.	67	95.72

Table 4. Distribution of teachers according to rank.

Category	Teachers (n=70)	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Professor	42	60.00
Associate Professor	22	31.43
Assistant Professor	6	8.57

Table 5. Distribution of teachers according to service length.

Categories	Score range (Years)	Teachers (n=70)	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Short	<15	5	7.15
Medium	15-29	51	72.85
Long	>29	14	20.00

Table 6. Distribution of teachers according to preference for teaching as a profession.

Preference	Teachers (n=70)	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 st	41	58.57
2 nd	24	34.28
3 rd	3	4.28
4 th	2	2.85

Table 7. Distribution of teachers according to attitude towards University.

Categories	Score range	Teachers (n=70)	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Unfavorable	<76	6	8.57
Favorable	76-93	56	80.00
Highly favorable	>93	8	11.43

Table 8. Distribution of teachers according to job satisfaction.

Categories	Score range	Teachers (n=70)	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Unsatisfied	<74	8	11.43
Satisfied	74-98	48	68.57
Highly satisfied	>98	14	20.00

Attitude towards University: The data from Table 7 indicate that a majority (80.00%) of the teachers has a favorable attitude towards the University. The table also indicates that 11.43% had a highly favorable attitude towards the University. The reason behind teachers having favorable and highly favorable attitudes to the University may be due to their level of satisfaction with the job security and social status that the job provides.

Job satisfaction: Analysis of the data presented in Table 8 indicates that a majority of the teachers were satisfied with their jobs followed by 20.00% being highly satisfied with their jobs.

Achievement motivation: The data presented in Table 9 shows that a majority (60.00%) of the teachers had a medium level of achievement motivation followed by high (21.43%) and low (18.57%) level of motivation. The mean (22.38) value belonged to medium level (17-28).

Role conflict: It is shown in Table 10 that majority (75.72%) of the teachers had medium level of role conflict, followed by 15.71% to high and 8.57% to low level of role conflict. This could be due to the fact that the teachers have to spend more times in various activities and thus they cannot clearly define their priorities. It may be also due to lack of clarity regarding the roles that they need to perform.

Relationship of socio-personal, professional and psychological characteristics of the teachers with the teachers' perceived effectiveness: The relationship between selected characteristics with the teachers' perceived effectiveness was examined by using chi-square test, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient and multiple regression based on the nature of the variables under consideration. Association of 4 of the independent variables viz. gender, education, rank and preference for teaching as a profession with the perceived teachers' effectiveness were done with chi-square test, the remaining 6 independent variables viz. age, service length, attitude towards university, job satisfaction, achievement motivation and role conflict were analyzed for association with correlation coefficient and multiple regression.

Chi-square test of independence of selected independent variables with teachers' effectiveness as perceived by them: Table 11 depicts the chi-square values resulting from the test of association between the 4 selected independent variables with the dependent variable. The findings revealed that the association of gender, education, rank, preference for teaching as a profession with the teachers' effectiveness as perceived by them as non-significant. This indicates that there is no association between teachers' gender, educational level, rank and preference for teaching as a profession with their perceived effectiveness.

These findings were similar to the findings of the study conducted by Boyce (1912), Anderson (1954) and Kalra (2010) and contradictory to that conducted by Debnath (1971).

Table 9. Distribution of teachers according to achievement motivation.

Categories	Score range	Teachers (n=70)	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	<17	13	18.57
Medium	17-28	42	60.00
High	>28	15	21.43

Table 10. Distribution of teachers according to role conflict.

Categories	Score range	Teachers (n=70)	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	<24	6	8.57
Medium	24-36	53	75.72
High	>36	11	15.71

Table 11. Relationship of selected independent variables with teachers' effectiveness as perceived by them.

Characteristics	Teachers' effectiveness
	Chi-square value
Gender	0.015 ^{NS}
Education	1.635 ^{NS}
Rank	2.71 ^{NS}
Preference for teaching as a profession	0.944 ^{NS}

NS: Non-significant.

Table 12. Correlation co-efficient of teachers' socio-personal, professional and psychological characteristics with teaching effectiveness.

Characteristics	Teachers' effectiveness
	r value
Age	0.117
Service length	0.067
Attitude towards University	0.491**
Job satisfaction	0.344**
Achievement motivation	0.006
Role conflict	-0.037

** Significant at 0.01 level probability.

Table 13. Regression co-efficient of teachers' socio-personal, professional and psychological characteristics with teaching effectiveness.

Variables	Teachers' effectiveness			
	b	t	R ²	F
Age	0.867	1.075		
Service length	-0.774	-1.179		
Attitude towards University	0.602	3.138	0.282	4.133**
Job satisfaction	0.131	0.878		
Achievement motivation	-0.168	-0.627		
Role conflict	0.201	0.923		

**Significant at 0.01 level probability.

Correlation of selected socio-personal, professional and psychological characteristics with teachers' effectiveness as perceived by themselves: Table 12 shows the findings of the correlation analysis between teachers' perceived effectiveness and the six selected characteristics. The findings revealed a positive and significant correlation between teachers' effectiveness and attitude towards University (0.491**) and job satisfaction (0.344**) which indicates that the teachers who had higher attitude towards University and also a higher level of job satisfaction had higher perceived teachers' effectiveness in the use of Instructional technology. These findings were similar to the findings of the study conducted by Barr and Jones (1953) and Mishra and Talukdar (1997). Moreover, correlation between teachers' effectiveness and age, service length, achievement motivation was positive and non-significant. Similarly, the correlation between teachers' effectiveness and role conflict was negative and non-significant.

Multiple regression analysis of selected socio-personal, professional and psychological characteristics with teachers' effectiveness as perceived by themselves: Multiple regression analysis was done between the six selected socio-personal, professional and psychological characteristics independent variables and the teachers' effectiveness. Table 13 shows the regression co-efficient of these selected variables with the teachers' effectiveness as perceived by them. It reveals that six independent variables had non-significant regression co-efficient. However, the R^2 value being 0.282 suggests that the 6 independent variables jointly contributed to 28.2% towards variation in the teachers' perceived effectiveness. The F value ($F = 4.133^{**}$) was also found to be significant which indicates the significant efficiency of these 6 independent variables in predicting the teachers' effectiveness when all the selected independent variables were functioning jointly.

Conclusion

Even though the area of study was small yet the results could shed some light regarding the socio-personal, professional and psychological characteristics of the teachers. It was seen that most of the teachers have medium to high achievement motivation, so opportunity must be made available to them for accomplishment of their goals. Role of teachers must be made clear to them to reduce conflict in fulfilling their duties. Steps have to be taken to develop more favorable attitude of the teachers towards the University by bringing in transparency and involving teachers in major decision making process. On a short-term basis, provision for visiting faculty to tide over the shortage of teachers and on a long term basis, recruitment of new teachers to integrate younger age group could be of help in reducing stress and also to create a more balanced as well as innovative environment in and around the university.

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