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Evaluating the Agricultural Science Student's Outlook on Occupation in Agriculture Sector (Case Study: Islamic Azad University of Birjand)

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Abstract: ***The aim of this study is to evaluate the outlook of agricultural sciences students of Islamic Azad University of Birjand on career in agriculture sector. The statistical population consisted of 500 students of agriculture department, for which utilizing the Cochran`s formula sample size of 84 individuals was determined and increased to 300 to enhance the confidence percentage. Data collecting means was questionnaire for which using context evaluation method by a group of agriculture-specialists psychometrics was conducted and through an initiative experiment, using the Cronbach`s alpha, the credit of the questions were assessed and mandatory amendments were done. The results of the regression model demonstrated that three factors of the government`s policies regarding to career, available facilities and amenities and individual`s interests in agricultural jobs are the most leading factors contributing in fostering the future prospect of the agricultural sciences students, respectively.***

Keywords: outlook, agricultural sciences students, occupation, Islamic Azad University of Birjand

1. Introduction

In many developed and developing countries, the agricultural sector has a prominent role in food produce, providing job opportunities and trade. Although in the initial days of industrialization according to the first development theories, the agriculture sector was recognized as a promoting sacrificed upon the economical progression in industry, this outlook in today`s conditions in many countries has been replaced by correlative progression and development of the whole economic sectors without any specific bias. Agricultural sacrifice has also been prevalent in Iran and with the embarkation of the country`s industrialization, the politicians and council`s focus has been averted to industrial sector rather than the agriculture. The majority of budgets and outlay were transformed from agriculture to industrial sector and the former was attenuated by the latter, therefore remained isolated from the development flow. The effects of this isolation were soon revealed by the decrease in agricultural income, migration towards cities and the over-crowding of workforce in urban areas. The significant role of agricultural sector in fostering the economics of the state, in spite of its decreased share in total budget in comparison with other sectors, has made many of the legislator councils to admit that this sector could be regarded as an appropriate platform for career. While the main topic of all disputes are focused on the population`s youthfulness, it may seem unexpected and rather hasty to focus on the population`s elderly. In contrast, it is a stark fact that some of the society`s sectors are now affected by aging and tendencies for the old is extending for them. For example, this phenomenon is seen in the workforce recruited in agriculture section.

One of the fundamental issues of developing countries is the unemployment of its graduates (Ahmadi et al, 1382). Vocation is of the mainstream demands and a contributing factor in forming a human`s entity. The unemployment rate in Iran is around 12 percent and this rate among the agricultural sciences and natural resources graduates is more than 20 percent. This is the case while the agriculture is of the most important infrastructures of every nation`s economics and its progression and development is an evident feature of a developed economics and is regarded as a nation`s authority for any country (Adib and Vazehi, 1386). Despite the relative economic advantages, this sector has not been considered as a means for job opportunities yet.The agricultural sector in Iran and many other countries of the world, owing to its produce and its job opportunities has an incomparable increasing potential in comparison to other economic sections and could act as an important sector in providing job opportunities. This section because of its more economic job providing in comparison with industry, easier relative merging to the international market, the potential of the advancing the quality of agricultural supply depending on the country`s facilities, maintaining the rural populations in rural areas through the agricultural job developments and as a result, a decrease in rural migration and exorbitant prices of urban facilities has many job-related advantages in comparison with industry. Nevertheless, the industry has surpassed this section owing to its special features and discipline in working inside the frame of working-places, factories and firms, fewer risks, more expectable behavior of the consumers, presence of defined descriptions regarding to job`s relationships, utilizing modern technologies, focus of the activities on special areas and many other factors has been successful in more facilitated and faster incorporation of internal and external budgets and the ability to form and foster the novel job opportunities.

Since the most prominent dilemma of agricultural sciences students and graduates and also the state`s authorities is to enhance the job opportunities, revealing the practical

measures in order to provide more jobs is of great importance. In this study, we are trying to recognize and provide practical measures so as to foster the future prospects of agricultural sciences students using evaluation of their outlook on the job landscape of agriculture section.

2. Study Purpose

The general purpose of this study is to evaluate the outlook of agricultural sciences students of Islamic Azad University of Birjand on occupation in agriculture sector. The specialized aims in parallel with reaching the general purpose consisted of:

1. Evaluating the causes and concerns regarding to unemployment in agriculture section.
2. Evaluating the link between available job opportunities, individual`s interests in jobs related to agriculture major, government policies regarding to occupation and job tendencies in agriculture section.
3. Evaluating the relation between financial and official facilities and amenities, specialized abilities of students, relationships with job centers and tendency to get occupied in agriculture sector.

3. Materials and Methods

This study is a survey in which correlations and regression analysis has been conducted. For describing the data, descriptive analysis including dispersion index (variance and standard deviation) and central index (mean and frequency) was utilized. In analytical statistics, the Spearman`s rank correlation coefficient and multi regression analysis in its stepwise model, was conducted. The statistical population of this study consisted of 300 students of Islamic Azad University of Birjand. The volume of statistical sample was selected using a sample group and Cochran`s statistical and random sampling. Data collecting means was questionnaire. Final assessment and the validity of research were assessed using a pre-test among 20 students with agriculture "promoting and education major" as a sample group utilizing SPSS18 software. The Cronbach`s alpha factor for the ordinal questions of the questionnaire was 0.88, which indicates high validity of the questions. Moreover, in the sixth section of the questionnaire, using 20 items the outlook of graduates on agricultural occupation was assessed using 5-alternate Likert spectrum. In order to determine the type of responder`s outlook and categorizing them, ISDM [Interval of standard Deviation from the Mean] method was used. In this method, output data is divided into four levels according to what is described below and ultimately the selected variable is assessed regarding to the frequency and percentage figures in each level.

A= negative: A< Mean-SD
B= semi-negative: Mean - SD < B < Mean
C= semi-positive: Mean < C < Mean + SD
D= positive: Mean + SD < D

4. Results

Among 300 students of agricultural sciences, 166 (55.2%) were female-students and 134 (44.8%) were male-students and their average age was 23 with the youngest 18 and the oldest 28 years old. Most of them were between 21 to 24 years old (table1).

Table 1: Distribution of students by age

Percent	*Frequency*	*Age*
7	21	20 &down
70.4	211	21-24
16	48	25-28
4.3	13	29-33
2.3	7	33 &up
100	300	Total

One of the important results for this study was the degree of the student`s interest in choosing their major. According to statistics, 219 students (73%) had a former interest and 81 students (27%) lacked a former interest when debating this major (table2).

Table 2: Great interest of students in agriculture

Percent	*Frequency*	*Great Interest*
27	81	No previous favorite
73	219	The previous favorite
100	300	total

In addition, the results of table (3) demonstrated that 94.3% of students under study, were urban settled while merely 5.7% of them were rural-dwellers.

Table 3: Distribution of students in the residence

Percent	*Frequency*	*Residence*
94.3	283	city
5.7	17	Village
100	300	total

According to the table(4) results, as can be seen, 16.3% (49) of students had a positive outlook, 36.6% (109) of students had semi-positive outlook on occupation in agriculture sector, while 44.7% (134) of students had semi-negative outlook and 2.7% (8) of students had a negative outlook on occupation in agriculture sector. Findings show that 47.4% (142) of students in total did not have a good assumption on this matter, while 52.6 (158) of them had a better assumption on it.

Table 4: Type of attitude towards employment in agriculture

The cumulative percentage	*percent*	*frequency*	*Type of attitude*
2.7	2.7	8	Negative
47.3	44.7	134	Fairly negative
83.3	36.3	109	Relatively positive
100	16.3	49	Positive
-	100	300	total

Table (5) demonstrates frequency distribution and prioritizing the factors that influence job selection by students. Results show that according to the coefficient of variation assessed, using educational qualification with (0.153) coefficient of variation is the first priority, gaining income with (0.158) coefficient of variation the second, self-interest with (0.165) coefficient of variation the third, relationship with specialization with (0.181) coefficient of variation the forth and promoting the science level with

(0.201) coefficient of variation has allocated the fifth priority to themselves.

Table 5: The factors affecting career choices

Coefficient of variation	Standard deviation	Average	Very little	little	average	much	very much	factors affecting career	Priority
0.153	0.689	4.69	1.7	5	5	14.1	74.2	The qualification	1
0.158	0.714	4.45	6.4	11.5	4.3	33.6	44.2	Earn	2
0.165	0.768	4.33	1.4	2	9.5	38.5	48.6	Personal Interests	3
0.181	0.816	4.42	1.9	6.3	5.6	35.4	50.8	Communication with specialization	4
0.201	0.854	4.26	2.1	10.4	5.2	35.3	46.1	Promotion of science	5

In this study, the factors that enhance the agricultural sciences student's tendencies to involve activities within agriculture section after graduation were assessed and explained in table (6).

Table 6: Factors influencing students' attitudes toward employment in agriculture

Coefficient of variation	Standard deviation	Average	Factors attitudes toward employment in agriculture	Priority
16.09	0.70	4.35	Eliminating the vocational barriers of agricultural section`s graduates	1
17.24	0.86	3.48	Enhancing the budgetary support of the government for inviting them	2
23.96	0.92	3.48	Aligning the agricultural experts with executive jobs	3
25.50	0.90	3.53	Financial support of the government from the private sector of agriculture-related sectors.	4
25.76	0.93	3.61	Fortifying the non-state and private formations of agriculture section	5
28.02	1.02	3.64	Structural adjustments in the system of involving the students	6
28.37	1.01	3.56	A rational and regular correlation between the educational schemes through the period of study	7
28.92	0.94	3.25	Maintaining an effective and mutual relationship between agricultural and industrial sectors	8
29.91	1.08	3.61	Enhancing job security in agriculture section	9
29.92	1.08	3.81	Enhancing the quality of education in agriculture section	10
31.67	1.14	3.41	Developing the vocational fields in agriculture section	11
33.95	1.08	3.74	Enhancing the trade union rights	12

According to the table (6) `s results, the factors that influenced the future occupation of the students from their own point of view were these, respectively:

1) Eliminating the vocational barriers of agricultural section`s graduates
2) Enhancing the budgetary support of the government for inviting them
3) Aligning the agricultural experts with executive jobs
4) Financial support of the government from the private sector of agriculture-related sectors.
5) Fortifying the non-state and private formations of agriculture section
6) Structural adjustments in the system of involving the students
7) A rational and regular correlation between the educational schemes through the period of study
8) Maintaining an effective and mutual relationship between agricultural and industrial sectors
9) Enhancing job security in agriculture section
10) Enhancing the quality of education in agriculture section
11) Developing the vocational fields in agriculture section
12) Enhancing the trade union rights

The output results of multi-variate regression analysis with stepwise model, *the government`s vocational policies* variate (X1) with regression slope of B=0.252 and t=3.770 and the significance level of 0.000 in the first step, *the facilities* variate (X2) with regression slope of B=0.116 and t=2.720and the significance level of 0.007 in the second step and *the agriculture-related interests*variate (X3) with regression slope of B=0.132 and t=2.582 and the significance level of 0.010 in the third step had the ability to demonstrate approximately 94% of the variable changes in vocational tendencies in agriculture section. In other words, the three named variants expressed nearly 94% of dependent variable variance of tendencies to agriculture sector (table 7).

Table 7: Summary regression tendency of students to work in agriculture

P	T	BETA	B	Intercept
0.023	2.293	-	0.567	Government policies in the field of employment
0.000	3.770	0.237	0.253	Facilities available
0.007	2.720	0.160	0.116	Interest in jobs related to agriculture
0.010	2.582	0.144	0.132	Intercept

5. Discussion

According to the results, 94 percent of students possessed a positive outlook on agricultural occupation. Hence, in total, the students of this statistical population had a positive outlook on the features of agriculture-related occupation. From student`s point of view, the government`s agricultural-related vocational policies, available facilities and amenities

and self-interest in agriculture-related occupations are the highest priority factors in choosing a job- a finding that was concordant with that of Akbari.et.al(1388) but was not in concordance with Karani et.al(1388) and Amiri Ardekani (1376) studies who reported self-interest, income making and social status as the highest priorities among other variants in choosing a job.In a thorough wrap up, one can conclude that the basic causes of agricultural sciences student`s unemployment and disinclination to get occupied in agriculture-occupations, is not a specific property of this job or has less impacts, whereas out-sector factors such as the government`s policies regarding to occupation and available facilities and amenities are from the influential factors. Accordingly, it is proposed that since the most of the student`s outlook is positive on agricultural-occupation, necessary platforms for their vocation utilizing thorough legislations and arrangements should be created so as to refund the educational budgets allocated on them. Studies show that the agriculture sector could fulfill an important part of demanded job opportunitiesin a developing country until a certain remedy of occupation concern. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on agriculture and its significance in national economics and providing inner and outer job conditions by authorities. Besides, regarding to the role and efficiency of education in gaining the demanded behaviors when choosing a job, it is of great importance to construct practical arrangements and defined policies in the agricultural education system and the way of interacting agricultural higher education system with the workplace using appropriate educational and training scheme.

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