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Job perception and job performance of Assistant Technology Managers (ATM) under ATMA in North Karnataka

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Abstract

India's agriculture has a planned extension services history since the 1950s. Agricultural extension services have evolved, with the World Bank's Training and Visit system in 1974 and subsequent initiatives like the National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) in 1998. This study examines the job perception and performance of Assistant Technology Managers (ATMs) in India's Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) program, focusing on the North Karnataka region. Surveying 95 ATMs across seven districts. The research employed an ex-post facto research design. A structured questionnaire was devised for data collection. ATMs expressed their job perception regarding physical fitness and appreciate colleague support, concerns about job security and salary dissatisfaction are notable. Most ATMs maintain a moderate to high job perception (88.89 %), suggesting a balanced perspective on the challenges and rewards of their roles. In terms of job performance, ATMs excel in organizing farmers' groups, monitoring their activities, and assisting with inputs. Notably, documentation and reporting received the highest performance index of 89.78. However, coordinating and supporting activities present opportunities for improvement. Analyzing the correlation between job perception and performance, a strong positive connection is established ($r=0.705$). Positive job perception contributes to higher job performance, indicating the significance of addressing concerns and fostering a supportive work environment. In conclusion, this study underscores the need to address job security and salary concerns, enhance teamwork, and provide skill development opportunities for ATMs to optimize their job perception and performance.

Keywords: Job perception, job performance, ATMA, ATM

Introduction

India's agricultural sector has a long history of planned agricultural extension services dating back to the 1950s. These services were introduced to educate farmers about efficient agricultural practices and have undergone various transformations over the years. The World Bank introduced the Training and Visit system in 1974, which initially showed promise but faced issues related to funding and staffing. In response, the National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) was launched in 1998, focusing on decentralization and demand-driven extension services. The Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) played a central role in this approach, aiming to involve various stakeholders in technology dissemination at the district level. Assistant Technology Managers (ATMs) are integral figures within the framework of the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) program in India. Operating at the Block level, ATMs play a vital job in bridging the gap between the agricultural extension system and various stakeholders, including Farmer Friends (FF), Agripreneurs, farmers, and community groups. It becomes essential to explore various aspects of their job perception and job performance of ATMs. Previous researches explored the job perception and job performance of various extension personnel, but there is a gap in the literature

concerning Assistant Technology Managers (ATMs) within the context of job perception and job performance. Therefore, this investigation seeks to shed light on the multifaceted tasks and contributions of ATMs within the context of ATMA, particularly in the North Karnataka region.

Materials and Methods

The research was conducted across all seven districts within the jurisdiction of the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, specifically Bagalkot, Belagavi, Dharwad, Gadag, Haveri, Uttara Kannada, and Vijayapura in North Karnataka. The study encompassed all operational ATMs within these districts, resulting in a sample size of 95. The research employed an ex-post facto research design. A structured questionnaire was devised for data collection, administered through face-to-face interviews and a Google Form with multiple-choice questions. Subsequently, data analysis utilized statistical measures such as frequency, percentage, mean score, indices and correlation.

Results and Discussion

Job perception of ATMs

The result in Table 1 reveals the highest overall job perception index (82.44) for the statement, 'I feel I am

physically fit for the job assigned to me'. This might be due to the fact that, most of the ATMs belonged to young age. Youth is often associated with higher energy levels and better physical health, which can lead to a greater sense of being physically fit for the job. It is also due to the fact that ATMs with high experience in their respective fields may handle job responsibilities efficiently and become more adept at managing physical tasks, followed by the statement, 'Support from colleagues' had second highest index (80.89). It suggests that ATMs perceive a positive work environment with supportive colleagues. Such cooperation and encouragement are crucial for fostering teamwork and a sense of belonging.

Further, the second least job perception index (62.00) for the statement, 'Absence of fear of job loss'. The lower perception index for this statement suggests that there might be concerns among ATMs regarding job security. Fear of job loss is due to the fact that ATM post is a temporary post. Fear of job loss can impact morale and job satisfaction,

highlighting the importance of fostering a sense of job stability. Effective communication from ATMA about the future of the ATM positions and any potential opportunities for extension or permanent roles could help alleviate the fear of job loss and improve job perception. The least job perception index of 48.44 for the statement, 'I receive handsome salary in time with all due and claims'. This suggests that many ATMs might not be fully satisfied with their salary and related financial benefits. This lower perception could be a result of several factors, such as salary disparities, inadequate increments, delayed salary payments, or a lack of additional benefits or incentives. Insufficient financial compensation can lead to reduced motivation, job dissatisfaction, and potential retention challenges for the organization. Most of the AMTs are graduates and post graduates. They compare their salary to their colleagues working in other departments and feel they are also entitled for all the salary benefits.

Table 1: Job perception of ATMs (n=90)

Sl. No	Perceptual Statements	Mean score	Index
1	I feel I am physically fit for the job assigned to me	4.12	82.44
2	I get support, co-operation, encouragement from colleague with whom I work	4.04	80.89
3	I am having sufficient clarity with regard to the job I perform	3.99	79.78
4	I am having adequate knowledge and understanding with regard to the nature of job	3.94	78.89
5	I get support from the beneficiaries of the organization	3.93	78.67
6	My mental health is in -proper order to do my job without any difficulties	3.88	77.56
7	I get adequate family support to sustain my interest in the job	3.88	77.56
8	There is a free interaction with my colleagues in the organization	3.88	77.56
9	I like my job very much than the job I had already performed before	3.82	76.44
10	The working environment inside the organization is conducive	3.70	74.00
11	There are adequate opportunities for updating and upgrading the knowledge and skill of an employee in the organization	3.62	72.44
12	I find myself with proper and adequate infrastructural facilities to carry out my assigned work smoothly	3.61	72.22
13	I feel safe in the working environment and able to protect myself from the negative effect	3.44	68.89
14	Various kind of leave is granted to the individual in order to help him/her to address/attend personal issues/matter	3.13	62.67
15	There is absence of fear psychosis on account of losing the job for some mistake	3.10	62.00
16	I receive handsome salary in time with all due and claims	2.42	48.44

The overall distribution in the Table 2 and Fig.1, indicates that the more than half (58.89 %) of ATMs had moderate level of job perception and nearly one-third (30.00 %) of ATMs had a good job perception. A smaller percentage (11.11 %) of ATMs had poor job perception.

significant portion of them hold a balanced view of their job. ATMs might encounter both satisfying and challenging aspects in their roles, leading to a moderate perception overall. Moderate perception could reflect a realistic understanding of job expectations and the recognition that no job is without its ups and downs.

Table 2: Overall distribution of ATMs according to job perception (n=90)

Sl. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Poor perception	10	11.11
2.	Moderate perception	53	58.89
3.	Good perception	27	30.00
	Total	90	100.00
Mean= 58.52 S.D= 15.44			

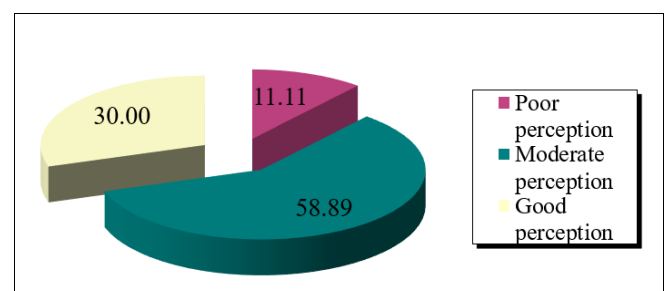


Fig 1: Overall distribution of ATMs according to job perception

This suggests that a significant portion (88.89%) of ATMs perceived that their job perception to be moderate to high. Factors such as job satisfaction, work environment, growth opportunities, and personal goals can collectively shape their perception of their jobs. The majority of ATMs falling into the moderate perception category indicates that a

Job performance of ATMs

The results presented in Table 3 provide insights into the job

performance of Assistant Technology Managers (ATMs) across different components of their roles. Under the planning and organizing component, The statement, 'Facilitating Farmers' Organization' reflects a high job performance index (88.89), indicating that ATMs excel in facilitating the formation of farmers' organizations at the block level. ATMs' success in this area could be due to their ability to engage and mobilize farmers effectively. ATMs might possess strong interpersonal skills, enabling them to build relationships and effectively mobilize farmers into groups.

In Monitoring and Evaluation Component, 'Monitoring Farmers' Group' statement had high performance index (87.78). A high job performance index suggests that ATMs are effective in monitoring the functioning of farmers' groups on a regular basis. Regular monitoring ensures that farmers' groups stay aligned with their objectives and receive necessary support. ATMs' dedication to continuous oversight and high level of job involvement fosters effective group dynamics.

Under Directing Component, the Statement, 'Helping

Farmers with Inputs' had high job performance index (89.56) indicates that ATMs excel in assisting farmers in obtaining necessary inputs from service centers. This might be due to the fact that ATMs' close interaction with farmers allows them to understand specific input requirements. Their assistance in sourcing inputs enhances farmers' access to resources.

In the component, Coordinating and Supporting Activities the statement, 'Convergence with Other Line Departments' had high job performance Index (88.67) suggests that ATMs are adept at coordinating ATMA activities with other line departments.

Under Documentation and Reporting Component, the statement, 'Documenting Daily Activities' had higher index (92.00). The highest job performance index indicates exceptional performance in documenting daily activities using various tools. Accurate documentation is vital for transparency and decision-making. This is due to the fact that documenting every activities in ERMS portal is necessary for ATMs to get salary.

Table 3: Job performance of ATMs (n=90)

Sl. No	Statements	Mean score	Index
A. Planning and Organizing			
1	Identification and prioritization of needs and interest of the farmers	4.41	88.22
2	Careful selection of the participants for extension activities like training, exposure visit, etc.,	4.32	86.44
3	Planning for preparation of teaching aids and organizing of farmers' meetings, trainings, demonstrations, exhibitions etc...	4.42	88.44
4	Planning and organizing of field days and exposure visits within state and to other states	4.30	86.00
5	Facilitating farmers' organization at block level (FIG/CIG, etc..)	4.44	88.89
B. Monitoring and Evaluation			
6	Monitoring the functioning of farmers' group on a regular basis	4.39	87.78
7	Evaluating the impact of training programmes, meetings, demonstrations, etc..	4.32	86.44
8	Knowing whether the inputs are actually used or not	4.29	85.78
9	Assessing whether the targets are reached and if not, why?	4.30	86.00
C. Directing			
10	Intimating farmers about the trainings, meetings, exhibitions through various channels	4.43	88.67
11	Helping farmers in getting necessary inputs from the service centres	4.48	89.56
12	Directing farmers by providing technical guidance and other specialized services to the farmers	4.47	89.33
13	Contacting farmers on their farm and home for transfer of technologies	4.41	88.22
D. Coordinating and Supporting activities			
14	Coordinate with other government agencies	4.17	83.33
15	Convergence of ATMA activities with other line Departments	4.43	88.67
16	Coordinate with other private sector agencies, NGO etc...	3.87	77.33
E. Documentation and Reporting			
17	Documenting daily activities (in notebook/online portal like ERMS portal)	4.60	92.00
18	Documentation and publication of success stories of farmers	4.36	87.11
19	Reporting farmers feedback in block meeting	4.47	89.33
20	Maintaining proper record and account for the activities carried out	4.53	90.67

The data presented in Table 4 and Fig. 2, illustrates that the ATMs achieved an overall job performance index of 87.19. Among the various components, documentation and reporting garnered the highest rank, boasting a job performance index of 84.57. Directing secured the second spot with a notable index of 88.94, while planning and organizing followed closely at 87.60. Monitoring and evaluation stood at 86.50, taking the fourth position, and coordinating and supporting activities rounded out the

components with a rank of fifth, presenting a job performance index of 83.11.

The rankings provide insights into areas that could benefit from improvement. For instance, ATMs might consider focusing on enhancing their Coordinating and Supporting activities, which ranked fifth. By fostering better teamwork and providing support to colleagues, they can contribute to a more collaborative work environment.

Table 4: Component wise job performance of ATMs (n=90)

Sl. No	Components	Mean	Index	Rank
1	Planning and Organizing	4.38	87.60	III
2	Monitoring and Evaluation	4.33	86.50	IV
3	Directing	4.45	88.94	II
4	Coordinating and Supporting activities	4.16	83.11	V
5	Documentation and Reporting	4.49	89.78	I
Overall		4.36	87.19	-

The overall distribution of ATMs in Table 5 reveals that more than one-third (38.89 %) of the ATMs had high level of job performance, followed by 32.22 percent of ATMs had

medium job performance and 28.89 percent of ATMs had low level of job performance.

Table 5: Overall distribution of ATMs according to job performance (n=90)

Sl. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Low job performance	26	28.89
2.	Medium job performance	29	32.22
3.	High job performance	35	38.89
Total		90	100.00
Mean= 87.41 S.D= 8.45			

The ATMs with high job performance might possess a diverse set of skills and extensive experience relevant to their roles. This experience allows them to handle tasks efficiently and a positive and supportive work environment can contribute to job satisfaction and, subsequently, job

performance. This is also due to that ATMs who had high level of ICT utilization and job involvement had high job performance.

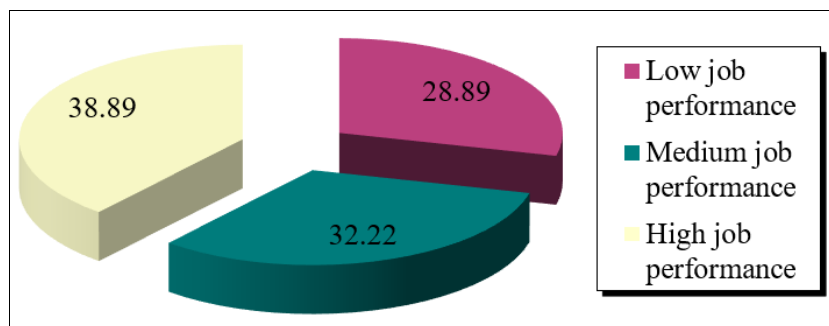


Fig 2: Overall distribution of ATMs according to job performance

Association of job perception and job performance of ATMs

Table 6 shows the correlation between job perception and job performance of ATMs (Assistant Technology Managers). The correlation coefficient (r) value between job

perception and job performance is 0.705, which is marked as significant at the 1 percent level. A positive correlation means that as job perception increases, job performance also tends to increase. The correlation coefficient value of 0.705 is relatively high.

Table 6: Correlation between job perception with job performance of ATMs (n=90)

Sl. No	Variable	r value
1	Job perception	0.705**

** 1 percent level of significance

When ATMs have a positive perception of their job, they are likely to be more satisfied with their work. Higher job satisfaction often translates to greater motivation and engagement, which can positively influence job performance. ATMs who perceive their job positively are more likely to be engaged and committed to their roles. They are willing to go the extra mile, take initiative, and get

involved in ATMA activities effectively, resulting in enhanced job performance. A positive job perception can also indicate a good fit between the job role and the skills, interests, and capabilities of the ATMs. When employees feel that they are a good fit for their roles, they are more likely to perform well.

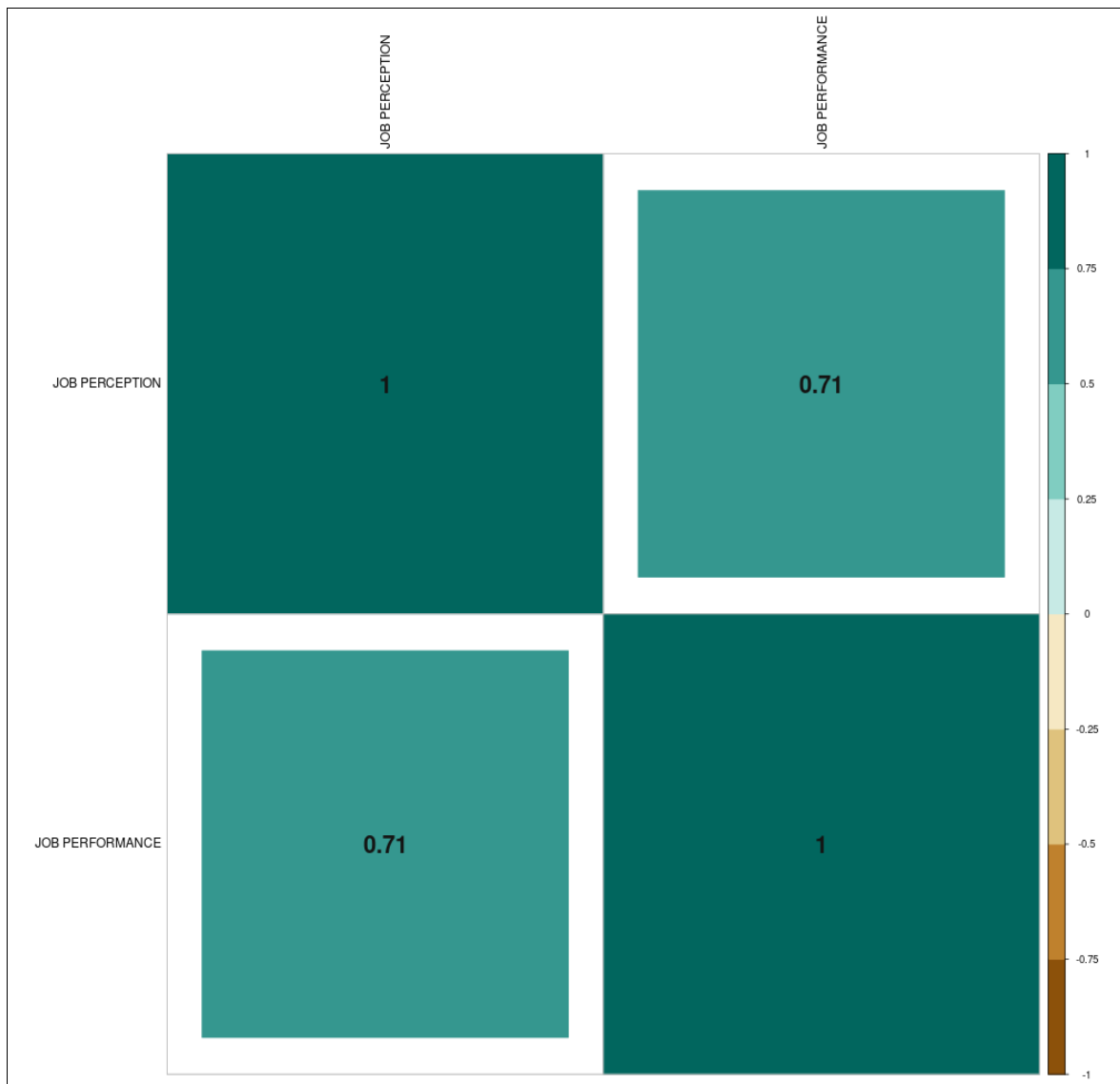


Fig 3: Correlogram between job perception and job performance of ATMs

Conclusion

This study focused on the job perception and job performance of ATMs in the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) program in North Karnataka, India. The results showed that while ATMs felt physically capable and appreciated support from colleagues, concerns about job security and dissatisfaction with salary were evident. Most ATMs had a moderate to high job satisfaction level, suggesting a balanced view of their roles. In terms of job performance, ATMs excelled in areas like organizing farmers' groups, monitoring their activities, assisting farmers with inputs, and coordinating with other departments. However, there's room for improvement in coordinating and supporting activities. The study found a positive connection between job perception and performance among ATMs. When ATMs had positive perception about their jobs, they tend to perform better. To enhance ATMs perception and performance, it's recommended to address job security and salary concerns, improve teamwork, and provide opportunities for skill development. Understanding and addressing these factors are vital for the long-term success of agricultural extension services in India.

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