

## THE PERCEPTION OF RURAL YOUTHS REGARDING TEAMWORK IN YOUTH CLUB

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### Abstract

*The main objective of this article is to present the results of a study done about perceptions of rural youths in the Shooshtar township of Khuzestan province in Iran regarding teamwork in youth club. The research design was a correlative--descriptive method. Rural youths of Shooshtar Township were the target population for this study. A random Sample of rural youths selected (n=356). Data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Appropriate statistical procedures for description (frequencies, percent, means, and standard deviations and spearman coefficient of correlation) were used. The main result of the study revealed that overall rural youths tended to agree or were unsure about teamwork in youth club and there exist correlation between the level of education, social participation, awareness with respect to teamwork approach and participatory skills with perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club. Liner regression for predict changes in perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club regarding level of education, Social participation, Participation in organizations, Awareness with respect to teamwork approach and Participatory skills may well explain for 68% changes ( $R^2=0/680$ ) in perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club.*

### Introduction

Teams are a part of everyone's life. You're a member of a family team, an extension staff team, school, and community teams. So it's appropriate that we understand how to function effectively as a team member (Gibson *et al*, 1980). According to Nair *et al* (2001) collaboration is a key determinant of an effective team and infers a relationship of interdependence. A number of principles are outlined in the literatures that determine effective teamwork and collaboration, many of which can be promoted via education:

- Mutual understanding of the roles, and ability to work across the boundaries of traditionally defined professional roles.
- Understanding and recognition of differences and commonality between professionals.
- Recognizing that the expertise brought by each member of the team is equally valid and important, with active promotion of equal status of members within the team.
- Understanding that effective conflict behavior requires both a high degree of cooperation and yet adequate assertiveness.
- Recognition that collaborative skills are not innate; rather, they are learned behaviors.

Extension clientele are confronted with increasingly complex problems with many dimensions (Gibson *et al*, 1980). The using teamwork approach has vital role in program development for rural youth. The youth are the strength of any nation. There is a widespread belief that rural youths have vital role to agricultural and rural development (Malatest, 2002; Odhiambo, 2001; Gameraen and Hinojosa, nd).

According to Gibson *et al* (1980) in the literature on teamwork, the following factors are identified as contributing to an effective teamwork approach. They provide the means for a team to begin to analyze its working relationship. They explained "attributes of ideal teamwork relationships":

- Participants believe in and are committed to the value of working together in a spirit of cooperation.
- Team size is appropriate for effective communication (2-5 members are ideal, a group of 5-10 is workable, a group of 10-15 is difficult, and more than 15 may be impossible unless divided into subunits).
- Participants understand the overall objectives of the organization and of the phase of the program each represents.
- Participants understand individual roles and responsibilities, as well as relationships to other staff members and to the total Extension program.
- Participants take the time to establish and clarify guidelines and procedures for a working relationship; they are committed to making plans and achieving them.
- Participants define and agree upon meaningful and measurable objectives that meet both group and personal needs; individuality and creativity are not stifled.
- Someone within the group assumes leadership to coordinate each task or program effort.
- Participants function well in a variety of roles (initiating, informing, summarizing, mediating, encouraging) and know when appropriate roles are needed.
- Participants know each other—are aware of each other's resources, skills and areas of expertise; they know what each can contribute to the group.
- The group allows sufficient time for the teamwork effort.

There are number of youth agencies and/or organizations around the world that are helping young people to become worthy citizens. An organization that stands tall among all organizations is youth in the United States and Canada (Radhakrishna and Ingram, 2005).

Rural youth who currently live or have lived in urban communities relocated to large centers to pursue post-secondary education, find employment, or accompany family (Malatest and Associates Ltd 2002). Youth working in agriculture often face unusual challenges—poor living and working conditions, loss of educational opportunities, separation from parental supervision, and exposure to pesticides and other occupational hazards (Samardick et al, 2000). According to Fajans *et al* (nd), rural youths have less opportunity in period of after formal education programming and activities than their urban counterparts. It is also acknowledged that youth get into trouble more often if they have no where to go and no meaningful activities to keep them occupied in after school hours.

According to Radhakrishna and Ingram (2005) need exists to create adult-youth partnerships to help youth participate in the development of policies that impact the lives and welfare of youth. As they explained 'collaborative efforts between developed and developing countries should focus on programs such as leadership and communication; building positive relationships and solving problems; becoming lifelong, self-directed learners; preparing for careers; and valuing healthy lifestyles, environmental awareness, and human diversity.

International agricultural and extension educators have the capacity and the ability to help youth develop in positive ways because they are the future. In addition, efforts should be made to help youth develop the capacity to voice their needs within the cultural, social, and political framework (Radhakrishna and Ingram, 2005: 666).

However, many developing countries like Iran are yet to recognize the potential of the youth particularly in rural development where the majority of the population lives. This study aimed to assess the perceptions of rural youths in the Shooshtar township of Khuzestan province in Iran regarding teamwork in youth club.

### Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. Describe rural youths in Shooshtar township of Khuzestan province by demographic characteristics.
2. Describe rural youths' perception regarding teamwork in youth club.
3. Describe perception of rural youths' awareness with respect to teamwork approach.
4. Identify correlation between selected personal, knowledge and skill variables with perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club.
5. Identify benefits of teamwork in youth club.

### Methodology

The research method employed was correlative-descriptive. The population consisted rural youths in Shooshtar township of Khuzestan province in Iran. A random sample of rural youths (n=356) was selected. The questionnaire was developed to collect data and it contained four sections: personal characteristics, social characteristics, perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club, and educational needs. A panel of experts of faculty members at Shooshtar University established content and face validity. A pilot test was conducted with 15 rural youths. Questionnaire reliability was estimated by calculating Cronbach, 's alpha. Reliability for the overall instrument was estimated at 0.87, which showed the reliability of the questionnaire. 352 questionnaires were answered of total questionnaires (n=356) .

Data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Appropriate statistical procedures for description (frequencies, per cent, means, and standard deviations) were used.

### Findings

The following section present finding by objective:

**Objective 1:** The first objective was to describe rural youths in Shooshtar township of Khuzestan province by demographic characteristics. All respondents were male. Approximately 45% of respondents were between 19 to 21 years of age (Table 1). Rural youths were asked to report their highest level of education: 34% of youths had an elementary education; 16% were illiterate; 35% had high school diploma; 15% had post high school education. Researchers administered the Questionnaires of youths that were illiterate based them idea.

**Table 1. The Age of Respondents**

Age	<i>f</i>	%	<i>Cum %</i>
15 to 18	126	35.7	35.7
19 to 21	158	44.8	80.5
22 to 25	68	19.5	100

**Objective 2:** The second objective was assessing perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club. Teamwork approach assessed by 10 strategies: Group discussing, Group decision making, System thinking within group, Participatory working, Participatory learning, Participatory appraisal, Participatory planning, Participatory program development, Participatory evaluating, Communicating with other. Overall ( $M=1.4$ ;  $SD=.89$ ) rural youths tended to agree or were unsure about teamwork in youth club (Table 2). For example, assessing perception of rural youths regarding use of group discussion in youth club indicated: 86.0% of respondents were agree, 10.8% unsure and 3.1% were disagree.

**Table 2. Rural Youths' Perception Regarding Teamwork in youth Club.**

Item	N	Agree		Unsure		Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
Use of group discussing in youth club	351	302	86.0	38	10.8	11	3.1
Use of participatory working in youth club	350	287	82.0	47	13.4	16	4.5
Use of participatory appraisal in youth club	351	261	74.3	54	15.3	36	10.3
Use of participatory learning in youth club	349	198	56.7	95	27.2	56	16.0
Use of participatory planning in youth club	352	187	53.1	108	30.6	57	16.2
Use of system thinking in youth Club	348	234	67.2	69	19.8	45	12.9
Use of participatory program development in youth club	351	289	82.3	36	10.2	26	7.4
Use of participatory evaluating in youth club	352	300	85.2	29	8.2	23	6.5
Use of group decision making in youth club	352	238	67.6	74	21.0	40	11.4
Use of communicating with other in youth club	352	213	60.5	88	25.0	51	14.5

Note: Scale: 1=Agree; 2=Unsure; 3=Disagree;  $M=1.4$ ;  $SD=.89$

**Objective 3:** The third objective was to describe perception of rural youths' awareness with respect to teamwork approach. In this research perception of rural youths' awareness with respect to teamwork approach was measured using a Likert-scale: 5) very much; 4) much; 3) moderate; 2) little; 1) very little. This research provides ranking of various items based on perception of rural youths' awareness with respect to teamwork approach. Awareness about communication with other, was found to be "very much" with a mean score of  $M=4.15$  and  $SD=.84$  (Rank=1) and awareness about System thinking was found to be "little" with a mean score of  $M=1.65$  and  $SD=.69$  (Rank=10). According to the results, rural youths should be taught about the system thinking, participatory program development, participatory evaluation, group decision-making and participatory working. Extension service training courses could be useful to teach rural youths in this regard.

**Table 3. Rural Youths' Awareness With Respect to Teamwork Approach in youth Club.**

Item	N	Mean	SD	Rank
Communication with other	350	4.15	.84	1
Participatory planning	351	4.08	1.06	2
Group discussion	352	4.03	.96	3
Participatory learning	348	3.89	.82	4
Participatory appraisal	350	3.54	1.12	5

Participatory working	352	3.26	1.03	6
Group decision making	350	3.06	.87	7
Participatory evaluation	351	3.06	.93	8
Participatory program development	352	2.45	1.04	9
System thinking	350	1.65	.69	10

Note: Scale: 5) very much; 4) much; 3) moderate; 2) little; 1) very little

**Objective 4:** The fourth objective was to identify correlation between selected dependent variables with perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club. The relationship between some selected respondents' characteristics with perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club is presented in (Table 4):

There was a significant relationship found between the level of education, social participation, awareness with respect to teamwork approach and participatory skills with perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club.

**Table 4. Correlation between selected dependent variables with perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club.**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Level of education	0.635	0.000***
Social participation	0.537	0.000***
Income	0.014	0.61
Age	0.009	0.69
Awareness with respect to teamwork approach	0.498	0.000***
Participation in extension and education course	0.118	0.050*
Participation in organizations	0.438	0.000***
Participatory skills	0.218	0.003**

Note. \*:  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*:  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*:  $p < 0.001$

**Objective 5:** The fifth objective was to identify benefits of teamwork in youth club. Table 5 shows participants perception with respect to benefits of teamwork in youth club. The results show the top three benefits of Teamwork Approach in youth Club. The personal benefits identified were: 1) Building confidence, 2) Making study more enjoyable, 3) Making study more rewarding, and about social benefits were: 1) Making friends, 2) Networking, 3) Finding allies, and educational benefits identified were: 1) Problem solving skills, 2) Reasoning skills, 3) Speaking skills.

**Table 5. Rural Youths' Perception With Respect to benefits of Teamwork Approach in youth Club.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<b>Personal benefits</b>				
Building confidence	350	4.03	.87	1
Making study more enjoyable	352	3.12	.96	2
Making study more rewarding	348	2.45	1.09	3
Helping to see the relevance of group work interaction for learning and for work	350	2.10	1.12	4

**Social benefits**

Making friends	350	3.15	.87	1
Networking	351	3.06	.93	2
Finding allies	351	2.45	1.06	3

**Educational benefits**

Problem solving skills	350	4.15	.95	1
Reasoning skills	351	4.12	1.06	2
Speaking skills	351	3.65	1.03	3
Leadership	348	3.12	1.12	5
Cooperation	350	3.09	.93	6

Note: Scale: 5) very much; 4) much; 3) moderate; 2) little; 1) very little

In continue used liner regression for predict changes in perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club. Level of education, Social participation, Participation in organizations, Awareness with respect to teamwork approach and Participatory skills may well explain for 68% changes ( $R^2=0.680$ ) in perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club. This relationship is described in the following formula:

$$+0.368x_5 + 0.472x_4 + 0.359x_3 + x_2 + 0.467 + 0.346x_1 + 7.863=Y$$

**Table 6. Liner regressions for predict changes in perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club.**

Tsig	T	Beta	SE B	B	Variable
0/004	2/451	0/525	0/235	0/346	Level of education ( $x_1$ )
0/000	3/442	0/266	0/612	0/467	Social participation ( $x_2$ )
0/000	4/496	0/459	0/234	0/359	Participation in organizations ( $x_3$ )
0/000	3/329	0/255	0/543	0/472	Awareness with respect to teamwork approach ( $x_4$ )
0/000	4/526	0/161	0/345	0/368	Participatory skills ( $x_5$ )
0/000 =Sig F					18/126 F=
0/680 = $R^2$					0/824= R

### Recommendations and Educational Importance

A teamwork approach has a vital role in development of rural youths' programs. Because team environments foster interaction and open communication, and create a desirable setting for generating new ideas, the ability to function effectively as a member of an interdisciplinary team has become essential. Based finding the top three benefits of teamwork approach in youth club about personal benefits were: 1) Building confidence, 2) Making study more enjoyable, 3) Making study more rewarding, and about social benefits were: 1) Making friends, 2) Networking, 3) Finding allies, and about educational benefits were: 1) Problem solving skills, 2) Reasoning skills, 3) Speaking skills. The main result of the study revealed that overall rural youths tended to agree or were unsure about teamwork in youth club and there exist correlation between the level of education, social participation, awareness with respect to teamwork approach and participatory skills with perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club.

Extension educators can expand the opportunities in youth development issues. They have the capacity and the ability to help youth develop in positive ways. In addition, efforts should be made to help youth develop the capacity to voice their needs within the cultural, social, and political framework. Educators must educate participatory skills, social participation and awareness with respect to teamwork approach. We must:

- Provide a forum for rural youth to learn from one another, connect with peers across the country and share information and their perspective on issues of importance to rural youth.
- Continuing to establish the teamwork and building up membership base.
- Communicating and exchanging information, including establishing the teamwork in youth club.
- Encourage rural communities to make greater efforts to publicize youth issues, activities and strategies.
- Recognize that rural youth have limited access to post-secondary education opportunities; it is important that education and training institutions provide sufficient opportunities for rural youth to acquire the skills and education, particularly those that could be valuable to the local community. Providing conditions for rural youth to access post-secondary education opportunities is very important. Because there was a significant relationship between the level of education with perception of rural youths regarding teamwork in youth club.

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