Managing Human Resources in Iran

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Introduction
The wise use of financial, physical, and information resources, and the productivity of the organization as a whole, depend on effective and efficient functioning of the human resources. It is, after all, people who do the work. Unfortunately, this area of opportunity has been neglected by many Extension Services, Iran is no exception. Lack of knowledge and understanding perpetuates this problem, particularly as it relates to recruiting, selecting, retaining, motivating, and evaluating Extension agents in Iran.

Methodology
The population of this study included all extension agents (N=72) in the Central Province of Iran. The research design used for this study was a descriptive survey method. Content and face validity were established by a panel of faculty and graduate students in the Department of Agricultural Extension and Education at Tarbiat Modarres University, Tehran, and extension specialists in the Ministry of Agriculture. The instrument was pilot-tested with 10 extension agents in Tehran Province two weeks prior to the study, and needed modifications made. Questionnaire reliability was estimated by calculating Cronbach’s alpha. Reliability for the overall instrument was .86. The final response rate was 94.4%.

Major Points or Information to be Shared
- Sixty-six percent of respondents indicated problems with living arrangements were a major reason why Extension agents quit their jobs.
- Sixty-two percent of respondents indicated their post-secondary major influenced their decision to become an Extension agent.
- Fifty-three percent of respondents indicated that an interview combined with a written examination was the most appropriate method for selection and hiring.
- Over 60% of respondents indicated personnel evaluations employed a top-down authority pattern.
- Increased wages was the number one priority for motivating participants.
- Approximately half of the respondents indicated their work was monitored directly by their supervisors.

Conclusions or Lessons Learned
- The lack of suitable living arrangements for Extension agents is a major factor associated with high turnover rates. Living arrangements are a basic need that must be met for agents to be motivated and perform their job.
- Recruitment at the post-secondary level should focus on students whose majors are in-line with Extension’s mission and goals.
- Multiple hurdle approaches to selection and hiring are appropriate.
- The prevalence of top-down authority patterns may contribute to poor job satisfaction and little motivation.
- The absence of wage levels necessary to take care of basic physiological needs may prevent other motivational strategies from being effective. Pay appears to be an important link to higher Extension agent motivation.
- The significance of effective supervision in maintaining employee morale and productivity is indisputable; top-down authority and micro managing of Extension employees is inefficient and ineffective.

Educational Importance
The educational importance of this study is focused on three areas: Extension agent perceptions, human resource management practices, and institutional management practices. Little is know about Extension agents’ perceptions regarding managing human resources in Iran. The results of this study will contribute to the emerging body of associated literature. A better understanding of how agents perceive the human resource management practices including recruiting, selecting, retaining, motivating, and evaluating will help Extension be more effective and efficient. Top-down authority patterns of management continue to exist in Iran’s Extension service. This may contribute to problems associated with financial, physical, and information resources, and the productivity of the
organization as a whole.