

Original Research Article

Understandability of Course Content by Agricultural Experiential Learning Programme (AELP) Students of University of Agricultural and Horticultural Science, Shivamogga

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to analyse the Understandability of course content by the students of University of Agricultural and Horticultural Science, Shivamogga through Agricultural Experiential Learning Programme. The study was conducted in UAHS, Shivamogga of Karnataka state during 2019-20. Four colleges viz., college of Agriculture, Shivamogga. College of Horticulture, Mudigere. College of Horticulture, Hiriuru and College of Forestry, Ponnampet were selected purposefully. From each Discipline (Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry), 40 students who were experienced AELP during 2017-18 and 2018-19 were selected. Thus, the total sample size constituted to 120. The primary data was collected from respondents through pre tested interview schedule about extent of understandability of course content by students. It is found that, less than fifty percent of respondents had completely understood (40.00 %) the course content and nearly half of the student respondents mentioned their source as senior friends (41.67 %). Majority of the respondents spent one day (69.16 %) to understand the information presented in the module before selection. Cent percent of respondents were understood the scope of AELP (100 %).

Keywords

AELP,
Understandability,
Course content

Introduction

Higher Agricultural education system in India is providing technically qualified man power which helps in radical transformation of Agriculture. Main aim of Agricultural universities is to prepare agricultural students for serving farming community. Increasing job markets in private industrial agriculture need graduates who have entrepreneurial spirit and the capacity to independently set up enterprises in the areas of production agriculture and advisory services. The prevailing syllabus of agricultural education produces graduates seeking white-collar jobs

in government departments and are not confident enough to pursue self-employment. Their skill and knowledge capabilities do not fill the requirements of growing private sector. Also, they lack confidence and competence to undertake self-employment ventures leading to sustainable development of agriculture or setup agribusiness to support rural-based services. But there was need for agricultural education to respond to the requirements of employment, food security, poverty, economic growth and sustenance of the natural resource quality. To reorient agricultural education for employability, Indian Council of Agricultural Research

(ICAR) developed and launched a programme named Experiential Learning Programme to facilitate learning by experience for professional development. In pursuit of hands on training, a scheme on creating facilities for setting up experiential learning farms, model plants, engineering workshops, veterinary and plant clinics was launched during the tenth five-year plan (Katyal and Bisht, 2005). In this aspect it was necessary to analyze to what extent the students were understood the different aspects of the AELP course during the programme. With this background the study was conceptualized with the objective to know the extent of understandability of course by the AELP students prior to selection.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, Shivamogga of Karnataka state in 2018-19. The students who have undergone Agricultural Experiential Learning programme from different colleges of UAHS,

Shivamogga during the academic year 2016-17 and 2017-18 were constituted as population of the study. From College of Agriculture Shivamogga 40 respondents were selected, from College of Forestry, Ponnampete 40 samples were selected and from College of Horticulture, Hiriyur and College of Horticulture, Mudigere 20 each respondents were selected respectively. Thus 40 samples under each disciplines were selected and total sample constitutes to 120 respondents.

The schedule was developed for study to measure the extent of understandability of course content by AELP students prior to selection of module by considering four criteria. They are extent of understandability of course content, source of information to select module, Time spent on understanding information on AELP, Understandability of different aspects in AELP module.

The different dimensions of Understandability of course content prior to selection were quantified as follows;

Dimensions		Scores	
1. Extent of understandability of course content			
Fully understood 3	Moderately understood 2	Less understood 2	
2. Source of information to select the module			
Only senior friends 1	Only teachers/faculty 2	Seniors and teacher/faculty 3	Seniors, teacher faculty and own interest 4
3. Time spent on understanding information			
One hour 3	One day 2	One week 1	
4. Understandability of different aspects in AELP Manual			
Yes 1		No 0	

The results were expressed in frequency and percentages.

Results and Discussion

The data presented in Table 1 depicts the extent of understandability of course content by the AELP students. It is evident from the Table 1 that less than fifty percent of respondents had completely understood (40.00 %) the course content, 30.00 per cent of students had moderately understood followed by 30.00 per cent of students understood course content to less extent.

The probable reason for completely understood may be that it is mandatory for the agricultural science students to complete the AELP course, so it is necessary to understand the content of syllabus, and also the understandability of course content is influenced by the level of documentation of course content. The reasons for moderately understood may be the students did not grasp the full information covered in syllabus, may be that student's lack of practical exposure prior to selection of course. Understood course to less extent may be that the students may fail to achieve the familiarity with the factual content and they might have less interest towards the course and may be the student's lack of exposure prior to course. Further, structuring of course, description and presenting technique may be little bit difficult for the students to understand the course.

The data regarding source of information prior to selection of module for AELP course is presented in the Table 2 that nearly half of the student respondents mentioned their source as senior friends (41.67 %), teachers and by own interest followed by seniors and teachers/ faculty (33.33 %) and 13.33 per cent of students mentioned source of information as senior friends, only 11.67 per cent of students selected AELP module by obtaining information from the teachers, respectively.

The reasons for mentioning source as senior friends, teachers and own interest because students felt that teachers were experienced, teachers as a resource person they play a major role in guiding for students development and also they feel comfortable to clarify doubts and share their views with seniors.

The data in Table 3 represented that majority of the respondents spent one day (69.16 %) to understand the information presented in the module before selection. Almost one third of the respondents were spent one hour (20.00 %) to understand the information prior to selection and 10.84 per cent of respondents had spent one week to understand the information in module. The probable reason for spending one day to understand the information might be that they had more capacity for learning that has increased cognitive understanding and provide greater insight into the knowledge for understanding of course. For spending one week to understand information of AELP course because the students found difficulties in understanding the course and they may belongs to moderate understanding category.

The information presented in Table 4 depicts that cent percent of respondents were understood the scope of AELP (100 %), because it might be necessary for the students to study the extent of area or subject matter of AELP module. Majority of students had understood the aspects like concept of AELP (92.50 %) because students might be that understanding the philosophy and methodology may enhances knowledge, develop entrepreneurial skills, and inculcate values. About 90.00 per cent of respondents understood the objectives of AELP because, students may felt that the AELP course states with a clear purpose to focus their learning efforts, directed the students with choice of institutional activities. Similarly, 89.16 per

cent of students have understood the credit hours of AELP because each course is worth a certain number of credit points, determined

by different criteria including student's workload, learning outcome and contact hours.

Table.1 Extent of understandability of course content by AELP students prior to selection of module

Category	F	%
Completely understood	48.00	40.00
Moderately understood	36.00	30.00
Less understood	36.00	30.00

Note: F= frequency % = Percentage

Table.2 Source of information to select the module by AELP students prior to selection of module

Category	F	%
Only Senior friends	16.00	13.33
Only Teachers /Faculty	14.00	11.67
Seniors and teachers/ Faculty	40.00	33.33
Seniors, teachers and own interest	50.00	41.67

n=120

Note: F= frequency % = Percentage

Table.3 Time spent on understanding information on AELP prior to selection of module

Category	F	%
One hour	24.00	20.00
One day	83.00	69.16
One week	13.00	10.84

n=120

Note: F= frequency % = Percentage

Table.4 Understandability of different aspects in AELP Manual prior to selection of module

Category	F	%
Concept of AELP	111.00	92.50
Objectives of AELP	108.00	90.00
Scope of AELP	120.00	100.00
Placements in AELP	111.00	92.50
Credit hours of AELP	107.00	89.16
No of trainees and budgeting for learning facilities	63.00	52.50
Grouping of programme	62.00	51.66
Evaluation of performance of students and grading	64.00	53.33

n=120

Note: F= frequency % = Percentage

Table.5 Understandability of AELP course by the students after AELP

n=120				
Sl. No	Particulars	Category	F	%
1	Sources of technical information to understand the course	Professional literatures	37.00	30.83
		Lectures	9.00	7.50
		Lab based activity	39.00	32.50
		Field based activity	15.00	12.50
		Group discussion	20.00	16.67
2	Level of understandability of course content	Very Easy	23.00	19.17
		Easy	72.00	60.00
		Difficult	25.00	20.83
		Highly difficult	0.00	0.00

Note: F= frequency % = Percentage

Nearly half of the respondents (53.33 %) were understood the information regarding evaluation of performance of students and grading the reason for this may be now a days student might have least bothered about their scores and grades in the subject.

Understandability of AELP course content by the students after AELP

Sources of technical information to understand AELP course

The data presented in Table 5 depicts that source of technical information to understand the AELP course by students. A close look into Table revealed that 32.50 per cent of the respondents had understood technical information through lab based activities followed by professional literatures (30.83 %), group discussion with teachers and students (16.67 %) followed by field based activity (12.50 %) and lectures (07.50 %) respectively.

Level of understandability of course content

The information presented in Table 5 indicates the level of understandability of course content by students. Three fourth of students felt that course content was easy to

understand (60.00 %), one fourth of the students felt that course content was easy to understand (19.17 %) whereas, 20.83 per cent of students felt that course content was difficult to understand and none of the respondents felt that course content was highly difficult to understand .

In conclusion, majority of students were moderately understood the course content, majority of them spent one day to understand the information and majority of them understood the aspects like concept and scope of AELP. Finally we can conclude AELP course helping in imparting technical and practical knowledge to the students which is necessary for them in acquiring the entrepreneurial skills. AELP course content should include the aspects of all modules and it is necessary to develop the manual for each separate module of the AELP Course.

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