WILLINGNESS OF FARMERS FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING ON NEW PROFESSIONAL FARMERS AND ITS INFLUENCING FACTORS

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Abstract

The training of new professional farmers is urgently needed for the development of modern agriculture in China. Based on the audience psychology, this paper explores how willing are farmers to receive vocational training for new professional farmers, and the influencing factors of the willingness. A total of 750 farmers from various areas of Heilongjiang Province, China, were selected for a questionnaire survey on their willingness for vocational training. Based on the survey data, the willingness of the farmers for vocational training of new professional farmers was analyzed from the aspects of their understanding, motivation, learning content and preferred method of vocational training, and its influencing factors were discussed in terms of gender, age, education level and average monthly income. The results show that most farmers understand the connotation of new professional farmers; the main motivations to receive vocational training include solving production problems, earning more money and living a better life; the farmers want to learn planting and breeding techniques, the basic information of agricultural products and government policies through the vocational training, and prefer field teaching and classroom teaching as the training methods; gender, age, education level and average monthly income all have a significant impact on the farmers’ willingness to receive the vocational training. The research results are of great significance to the development of modern agriculture.

Key words: New Professional Farmers, Vocational Training, Willingness, Influencing Factors.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the basic industry that is related to the lifeline of the national economy, and the Three Rural Issues have always been the focus of rural works. Farmers are the mainstay of new urbanization construction, and the realization of agricultural modernization requires high-quality, modern farmers. The introduction of new professional farmers in 2012 has transformed the training of farmers into a vocational training direction, and the training of new professional farmers is an urgent requirement for the development of modern agriculture.

Developed countries such as Britain, the United States, and France all attach great importance to the cultivation and education of farmers, and have established professional farmer training systems with their respective characteristics. Normalized, long-acting, and institutionalized are the characteristics of the vocational training of farmers in developed countries (Flores, Hsieh, & Chiao, 2011). From the fours aspects of farmer qualification examination, training institution, management system and farmer training types, Yang Shimou analyzed and summarized the technical training of farmers in foreign countries (Roberts, 1920). Gu Xiaoyong et al. proposed through research that agriculture promotion, the training of farmers, and the academic education are the three main forms of vocational training of farmers in developed countries (Kavkewitz, 1965). In addition, a few experts and scholars...
believe that, innovating the training methods and training modes, promoting the construction of training system, and strengthening legislation are lessons that can be learned from the farmer training in foreign countries (Macht, Scherl, & English et al., 1970). In China, the training of new professional farmers started relatively late, and most of the training works are still in the stage of trials, observations or inspections; however, about the definitions of professional farmers, new professional farmers and the related theories of the training of new professional farmers, the research results are quite abundant; through investigation, Qi Naimin concluded that improper structure and low overall quality are the main problems existing in the training of professional farmers in Jiangsu Province (Vasilaky, 2013). Bai Lifang and Lei Yan pointed out that the old age of labor force, the high risks and the low status are the main problems existing in the training of new professional farmers in China (Feder, Murgai, & Quizon et al., 2004). From the perspectives of strengthening the qualifications of professional farmers and formulating relevant policies and regulations, Chen Jin put forward countermeasures and suggestions for the training of new professional farmers (Wang, Wang, & Zhang, 2014). In terms of enhancing the knowledge and skill training of the teachers and improving the training mechanism, Zhang Ye proposed an improvement path for the technical training of farmers (Snelder, Klein, & Schuren, 2007). Liu Fei et al. considered the selection of training elements, the family characteristics and the individual characteristics are the main factors affecting the training willingness of farmers (Pan, 2014). In addition, many experts and scholars have found through research that training time, education level, family income, and age are all important factors affecting farmers’ participation in training (Smith, Annis, Kaplan et al., 2012). By reviewing relevant references at home and abroad, it is found that the current studies on the training of new professional farmers in China still have the problem of unclear concept definitions, and the research focuses stay on the relevant issues in legislation, mechanisms, trainings, and countermeasures, and it has not yet formed specific theories or practical experiences, moreover, the research on the training of new professional farmers from the perspective of training subjects (namely the new professional farmers) is relatively weak (Van Dijk, Elwes, Main et al., 2018).

Based on the above analysis, this paper combines domestic and foreign reference literatures and first analyzes the concepts of new professional farmers, the training of new professional farmers, and the willingness of farmers to participate in the training; then from the perspective of audience psychology, this paper takes the subjects of the new professional farmer training – the new professional farmers as the research objects, and adopts the questionnaire survey method to analyze the willingness of the audience of new professional farmer training and its influencing factors, in the hopes of providing a new reference direction for the research on the training of new professional farmers.

RELATED CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL BASIS

New professional farmers

Farmers who engage in agricultural production and management activities with agriculture as the profession and profit as the purpose are called the professional farmers. The new type of professional farmers refers to agricultural workers who take agriculture as their occupation, take agricultural income as their main income, have certain management capabilities, and have higher scientific and cultural qualities and risk decision-making abilities. College-graduate village officials, village managers, farm machinery operators, gardeners, and other service personnel with professional skills, as well as the major farm machinery owners, major livestock breeders, major plant growers and other agricultural production and management talents are all new professional farmers.

Training of new professional farmers

At present, there isn’t a clear concept for the training of new professional farmers. Based on the summary of related references at home and abroad (Śnieżyński & Dajda, 2013), this paper proposes that the training of new professional farmers is the short-term and long-term training for the farmers of all levels to improve their skills and the agricultural production efficiency besides the basic education.

Willingness for the training of new professional farmers
WILLINGNESS OF FARMERS FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING ON NEW PROFESSIONAL FARMERS AND ITS INFLUENCING FACTORS

Will means the intention and willingness is one’s wish and will power. When people are driven by certain motives, they will generate opinions and thoughts for the matters, and the willingness is their psychological tendency before making the decision on certain things. Therefore, the willingness for the training of new professional farmers refers to the individual farmer’s psychological tendency before deciding whether to participate in the training of new professional farmers or not, and its specific manifestation is whether the individual has the willingness to participate in the training of new professional farmers.

WILLINGNESS OF NEW PROFESSIONAL FARMER TRAINING AUDIENCE AND ITS INFLUENCING FACTORS

In order to understand the willingness of the new professional farmer training audience and its influencing factors, this study selected 750 farmers from various parts of Heilongjiang Province as the subjects to investigate the willingness of the new professional farmer training audience from the aspects of the understandings, learning motivations, learning contents and preferred training methods of the new professional farmers, and analyze the influencing factors of the new professional farmer training audience from the aspects of gender, age, education level and average monthly income. A total of 750 questionnaires were distributed and 710 valid questionnaires were return, the effective rate was 94.67%. There were 363 male respondents and 347 female respondents.

Investigation and analysis of the willingness of the new professional farmer training audience

Figure 1 shows the statistics of the respondents’ understanding of the connotation of new professional farmers, from the figure we can see that 47.8% of the respondents have certain understandings about the concept of new professional farmers; 47.8% of them know it very well; 4.2% have never heard of it, indicating that farmers generally have a certain degree of understanding of the connotation of new professional farmers.

Figure 2 shows the statistics of the respondents’ psychological motivations to participate in the training of new professional farmers. It can be seen from the figure that the motivation of solving the problems encountered in production practice accounted for the largest proportion, 31.54%, followed by that 27.37% of the respondents participate in the training for the purpose of making more money and having a better life. The survey results show that the most respondents still stay at the stage of material needs, the motivation of improving academic qualifications accounted the least, 6.03%; and the motivation of improving one’s own qualities and social status accounted for 18.52%, indicating that the respondents also have certain needs for spiritual level pursuit.

Figure 3 shows the statistics of the respondents’ preferred training methods. It can be seen from the figure that the majority of respondents prefer one-to-one classroom training, followed by field training. The survey results show that the respondents prefer practical training methods and need to improve their skills and knowledge through practical training.
Figure 3 shows the training methods preferred by the respondents, wherein the field teaching method accounted the most, which is 38.3%, followed by the classroom teaching method and the one-on-one tutoring method, which accounted for 30.2% and 14% respectively, and the proportions of other training methods were fewer.

Figure 4. Psychological needs of learning contents

Figure 4 shows the investigation results of the learning contents preferred by the farmers, from the figure we can see that, planting and breeding techniques, the basic information of agricultural products and the government policy information ranked the top three in the psychological needs of the learning contents of the new professional farmer training, accounting for 31.43%, 27.38% and 24.32%, respectively. In addition, there are also psychological needs for the agricultural market information, business knowledge, and entrepreneurial policy, indicating that farmers also hope to improve their management level and skills besides knowledge learning.

Influencing factors of willingness of new professional farmer training

Gender

Figure 5 shows the statistics of the willingness of farmers of different genders to participate in the new professional farmer training, it can be seen from the figure that the willingness of male respondents is significantly higher than that of female respondents; among the respondents who hold an indifferent attitude, the proportion of female respondents is significantly higher than that of male respondents, which is related to the psychological habit of “men are work-centered and women are family-centered” which has existed in China for a long time.

Figure 5. Statistics of willingness of respondents of different genders to participate in the training of new professional farmers

Age

Figure 6 shows the statistics of the willingness of farmers of different ages to participate in the new professional farmer training, it can be seen from the figure that the
age group with the strongest willingness to participate in training is 36-45 years old, followed by the age group of 26-35 years old. This is mainly because subjects of these two age groups are the main labor force in the family, they have parents and children to support, and they are facing enormous living, economic and psychological pressure, therefore, they wish to improve their abilities and qualities through training so that they can improve their living standards.

**Education level**

**Figure 7.** Statistics of willingness of respondents of different education levels to participate in the training of new professional farmers

Figure 7 shows the statistics of the willingness of farmers of different education levels to participate in the new professional farmer training, it can be seen from the figure that respondents with a junior high school education level showed significant higher willingness to participate in the training than those with other education levels, respondents with an elementary school and below education level showed the lowest willingness to participate in the training. This is mainly due their living conditions and environment. Besides, the higher the education level of the respondents, the better their abilities to accept and understand new knowledge. Therefore, as long as they have the most basic conditions for training, they are willing to participate in the training.

**Average monthly income**

**Figure 8.** Statistics of willingness of respondents of different income levels to participate in the training of new professional farmers

Figure 8 shows the statistics of the willingness of farmers of different income levels to participate in the new professional farmer training, it can be seen from the figure that respondents with an average monthly income less than 1,500 yuan have the strongest willingness to participate in the training, on the one hand, this is because they have a strong desire to change their own living conditions, on the other hand, this is because the training of new professional farmers has a low threshold, and the learning cost is not expensive and within their affordable range. The respondents with a monthly income between 3501-4500 yuan have the weakest willingness to participate in the training. This may be because the monthly income of this group has basically met their needs, their living condition is comfortable, so their willingness for further study is reduced.

This paper adopts the chi-square test to analyze the factors that may affect the willingness of the farmers to participate in the training of new professional farmers, and the results are shown in Table 1. It can be seen that the correlation coefficients of the four factors of the willingness to participate in the new professional farmer training were all less than 0.05, indicating that gender, age, education level, and average monthly income all have a significant impact on the participation of new professional farmer training.
Table 1. Correlation analysis of the influencing factors of the willingness to participate in the training of new professional farmers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Average monthly income</th>
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<tr>
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<td>21.862</td>
<td>28.303</td>
<td>29.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.004</td>
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</table>

CONCLUSIONS

The Three Rural Issues have always been the focus of rural works, and farmers are the key to China’s agricultural development and reform. Cultivating new professional farmers is a fundamental way to promote agricultural modernization. From the perspective of audience psychology, this paper analyzed the willingness of the new professional farmer training audience and its influencing factors, and the specific conclusions are as follows:

1. This paper combined the previous research results to analyze the concept of new professional farmers, the training of new professional farmers and the willingness of the training of new professional farmers.

2. The survey results of the willingness of the training of new professional farmers showed that, most farmers have a certain understanding of the connotation of new professional farmers; solving the problems encountered in production practice, earning more money, and having a better life are the primary motivations for them to participate in the training; the top three training contents preferred by the farmers are the planting and breeding techniques, the basic information of agricultural products, and the government policy information; field teaching and classroom teaching are the preferred training methods of the farmers.

3. Gender, age, education level and average monthly income all have a significant impact on the training of new professional farmers. The willingness of male respondents to participate in the training is significantly higher than that of female respondents; the age group with the strongest willingness to participate in training is 36-45 years old, followed by age group of 26-35 years old; respondents with a junior high school education level show significant higher willingness to participate in the training than those with other education levels; and the respondents with an average monthly income less than 1,500 yuan have the strongest willingness to participate in the training of new professional farmers.

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REFERENCES


