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European Research Studies Journal Volume XXI, Issue 2, 2018 pp. 623-629 Managerial Competencies in Agriculture Mohamad Ikbah1 Abstract: The purpose of this study is: (1) to identify competencies that can be applied to agricultural extension agents in agribusiness in Kabila and Tilongkabila sub-district, and to explore contributing factors of agricultural extension agents' competence in agribusiness in the same sub-districts. The method used in this study is a survey method where data was collected through interviews and questionnaires.

Results of this research found that, competency of agricultural extension agents in the Kabila and Tilongkabila sub-districts on agribusiness, have the ability to design educational programs, the ability to implement education programs and the ability to manage information dissemination. The factors that influence agricultural extension agents' competence, are: knowledge, skills and attitudes of educators in designing educational programs, counseling programs to implement and manage agricultural field information. Keywords: Competence, Agricultural Extension Agents, Agribusiness.

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Managerial Competencies in Agriculture 624 1. Introduction Agriculture Field Officer Competencies are competencies of a field officer based on his knowledge, skill and attitude to implement agricultural field activities that have been developed together with farmers and the community.

These competencies will be mostly helpful to yield good performance, since competency is understood as the combination of skill, attitude, and knowledge reflected in job behavior that is observable, measurable, and can be evaluated. In some literature, competencies are often classified into two types, soft competency or competencies related to the ability to manage the working inter human relationship, and competencies to build interaction with others (Yueh-Shian and Weng-Kun, 2017; Burkaltseva et al., 2017).

Agricultural elucidation is a non-formal community education, in which, its implementation should be based on efficiency and effectiveness of the field officer performance, hence, every elucidation program introduced to the community is fully adoptable and is measurable by the community to prevent its social issues. Wet field rice agribusiness refers to a development of local, agriculture business supported by four agribusiness sub-systems, i.e.

(1) upstream sub-system, by providing infrastructure for production (wet field rice seeds, fertilizer, and pesticide), (2) agribusiness sub-system, e.g. rice field culture (management of soil, planting, crops management, harvesting and post-harvesting), (3) downstream sub-system, including yield processing and handling (diversification of rice products), and (4) supporting subsystem, consisting of provision of agribusiness capital, from the financing institutions (bank and koperasi) and marketing facilities as well as infrastructure (Hofstede, 2014).

Agricultural extension agents' competencies will tremendously help government in implementing agricultural development in programs in their respected areas, based on the planned field activities. Agricultural Extension agents, in implementing the agribusiness extension of rice field, are required to master some competencies in cultivating the rice field and managerial skills related with sustainable agribusiness management, e.g. marketing and working capital access.

Therefore, the farmers will feel that they are being assisted in developing and increasing the rice field agribusiness through agricultural development programs in order to increase the rice field productivity (Locander et al., 2002; Srinita, 2017). 2. Research Objective The purposes of this research are: (1) to identify the competencies of agricultural extension agent in field rice agribusiness, and (2) to explore contributing

factors of the competencies of agricultural extension agents in field rice agribusiness.

M.I. Bahua 625 3.

Research Methodology This research was carried out in Kabila and Tilongkabila sub-districts of district Bone Bolango. The research was conducted from February to April, 2015 using descriptive statistics to describe several variables related to the object of the research. This research has used the survey method, in which, data collection was carried out through interviews and the administration of questionnaires.

Data were taken from samples to be able to make generalization of the observed phenomenon, hence data collection method should be done properly. Qualitative data collected in this research consisted of primary and secondary sources. The observation smallest unit in this research is the agricultural extension agent and by involving the agents' supervisor and farmers, that were guided by the agents in each area.

This research involved 10 extension agents in Kabila and Tilongkabila sub-districts selected from the whole population were all the agricultural extension agents in these area. Data taken randomly and proportionately from all the population of agents. 4. Findings and Discussion 4.1 Characteristics of Agricultural Extension Agents This research finds out that the characteristics of agricultural extension agents in Kabila and Tilongkabila sub-districts of Bone Bolango districts are grouped according to the age, formal education level, and the number of trainings attended by the agents during their serving period.

3 agricultural extension agents were 20-35 years old (30%), 5 agents (50%) were 36-45 years old, and 2 agents (20%) were more than 45 years old. Taking into consideration the retirement age of 60 years, in the next ten years, Kabila and Tilongkabila sub-districts will lose 12% of their agricultural extension agents.

The characteristics of the agent are also determined by their level of formal education, the levels of education of the extension agents in research area are Junior High, Senior High, and Diploma 3. With reference to education, 1 agent (10%) has a junior high school diploma, 3 agents (30%) have a high school diploma, and 6 agents (60%) have diploma 3 (University degree).

In relation to the level of education stipulated by the Department Pertanian EI (2005), a first level extension agent has to have at least a diploma 3 qualification, and as mentioned above, the agricultural agents in both districts that met this requirement remained as low as 60%. In implementing their tasks, agricultural extension agents are not only relying on formal education, but also on the training to improve their knowledge and skill as agricultural extension agents in Tilongkabila and Kabila

sub-districts.

This is because their formal education may

Managerial Competencies in Agriculture 626 not be sufficient or related to their work, hence, technical trainings, i.e. rice agriculture and workshops on agribusiness product marketing are necessary. There are 5 extension agents who have participated in technical training for rice culture (50%), 3 extension agents (30%) have participated in training for agricultural product marketing, and 2 extension agents (20%) have participated in agricultural extension management training.

The Department Pertanian RI/Department of Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia (2005) stipulated that an extension agent has to participate in minimum 2 technical trainings during their term of office as the first level extension agent. In other words, the extension agent in Kabila and Tilongkabila sub-districts have met this requirement. Yet, improvement in management trainings is necessary.

The research resonates to the result seen in Bahua (2013) on "Model of Competencies development for Agricultural Extension Agent in Gorontalo Province," showing that 2.3% of extension agents' competencies was influenced by the level of formal education; 10.7% was influenced by the number of workshops they have participated; 32.1% was influenced by length of service; 34.9% was by the age of the agent.

Theoretically, this research is in harmony with Ruky (2003) who stated that individual characteristics that correlate with performance are called person specifications, namely: (1) technical knowledge and skills, (2) trainings attended, either specialization trainings, comprehensive trainings, or complementary trainings, (3) work experience, (4) motivation, (5) values system attitude as organizational core culture, (6) personality, (7) knowledge, (8) skill, (9) sex, (10) age, and (11) physical appearance as weight, height, hobbies, talent, and appearance. Agribusiness is closely related with community capacity improvement in production mechanism.

Basic competence of agricultural extension agents in wet field rice agribusiness is justified through extension activities planned together with farmers. 4.2 Competencies of Agricultural Extension Agents The research shows that the agricultural extension agents' competencies in Kabila and Tilongkabila sub-districts consists of: (1) designing the extension program, implementing the extension program, and (3) managing the extension information.

Competencies of agricultural extension agents are shown in their description of activities that correlates with learning process in the implementation of rice field agribusiness in Kabila and Tilongkabila sub-districts. This data is provided in the following Table 1.

M.I. Bahua 627 Table 1. Competencies of Agricultural Extension Agent in Rice Field Agribusiness Components of _Activity _Number _of _Percentage (%) _Extension Agents _Description _agents (person) _Competencies _____
 _Ability _to _design _the _Extension program _10 _100 _extension program _is designed _____ Ability _to _implement _Conduct learning _____ the extension program _process using _____ method and media _10 _100 _____ familiar to the _____ farmers _____ Ability to _manage _the _Manage extension _____ extension information _information through _____ internet, such as: _____ sending download, _10 _100 _____ and store _____ agricultural _____ information _____

Based on Table 1, the competencies of agricultural extension agents are: 1) designing the extension program; implementing the extension program; managing the extension information. These competencies are embedded in extension agents.

The agents are always guided by their competencies; it depends on the knowledge, skill and attitude of the agricultural extension agent in agricultural technology innovation. The research is in line with Wijianto (2010) on "Correlation of agricultural extension agents' competencies and the members of farmers group participation in Banyudono sub-districts of Boyolali district" which concludes that there was a significant correlation between extension agents' competencies and members of farmers group participation in group activities.

This means that every increase in value of the extension agents' competencies, would be followed by the increase in value in member's participation. Theoretically, this research is also in line with Boyatzis (1982) who states that, competencies are characteristics or one's ability to show or perform specific activities in a working environment that were conducted diligently, hence, the person can accomplish their role and duties given to them. 4.3

Factors that Influenced the Extension Agents' Competencies Competencies are basic characteristics of a person that influence their way of thinking and acting, making generalization on situations staying for long. Factors that influenced agricultural extension agents in rice agribusiness at Tilongkabila and Kabila sub-districts are available in the following Table 2.

Managerial Competencies in Agriculture 628 Table 2. Factors Influencing the Competencies of Agricultural Extension Agents in Rice Agribusiness. Component of

Influencing	Number of Agents	Agricultural Extension	Percentage (%)
Factors (Person)	Agent Competencies	Ability to Design the	
Knowledge	6	60	Extension Program
			Skill
			8
			80
			Attitude
			4
			40
			Ability to Implement the
			Knowledge
			8
			80
			extension program
			Skill
			8
			80
			Attitude
			2
			20
			Ability to manage the
			Knowledge
			5
			50
			extension program
			Skill
			3
			30
			information
			Attitude
			4
			40

Table 2 shows that the factors that influenced the competencies of the agricultural extension agent in rice agribusiness are: knowledge, skill, and the attitude of the agricultural extension agent.

This indicates that the extension agents who have knowledge, skill and a good attitude will make an impact on the increase of the extension agents competencies in managing the rice agribusiness. The research is in line with Damihartini and Amri Jahi (2005) on "Correlation of Farmers' Characteristics and Agribusiness Competencies in Vegetables Agribusiness in Kediri Sub-district of Jawa Timur", which concludes that the knowledge, attitude, and skill aspects are mutually independent in assessing the agribusiness aspects that have to be mastered by the farmers.

Overall, the research output shows the influence of knowledge and skill factors on agricultural extension agent's competencies in rice agribusiness. The knowledge on agricultural extension are mainly from formal education attended the agents, meanwhile their skills are more due to either technical trainings attended or practice done by the extension agents during their tenure. Theoretically, the research is also in agreement with Deborah et al.,

(2002) who describe that core competencies are a basic knowledge, skill, attitude and behavior that play a role in determining the success of an extension program. Wisconsin Cooperative Field officer states that a competency is a sufficient quantity of knowledge, skill, and responsibility to fulfill certain tasks or jobs. Missouri Cooperative Field officer states that every professional extension officer should processed their personal strengths, ability as educators, and skill in information technology and as expert in his/her field. 5.

Conclusions and Recommendations Based on the discussion and findings, the following conclusions are made: Competencies of agricultural extension agents in Kabila and Tilongkabila sub-districts, Bone Bolango district in Rice Agribusiness are the ability to design, implement and manage the extension program information.

M.I. Bahua 629 Contributing factors of the competencies of the agents in the research site in Rice Agribusiness are knowledge, skill and attitude of extension agents in designing, implementing, and managing the information related to extension programs.

Based on the findings in this research and its conclusion the following actions are recommended: The policy makers need to improve the competencies of agricultural extension agents in rice agribusiness by considering their level of knowledge, skill, and attitude of the agents in designing, implementing and managing the information related to rice agribusiness.

The agricultural extension agents, in order to help farmers in rice agribusiness, need to consider the competencies on their own knowledge, skill and attitude, hence, an extension program suited to the needs of the farmers and their agribusiness can be created. A further research needs to be done to explore the agricultural extension agents' competencies related to improvement of agribusiness products.

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