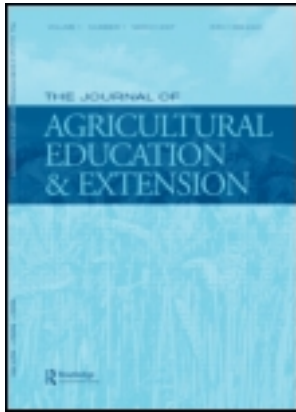


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Editorial

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Editorial

Dear reader,

As you have noted, in some of the previous issues of the *JAEE* I have not written a separate Editorial, but short pieces that were about thoughts I had and research I carried out during the last couple of years. The reason for this is that we are looking to include a new category of articles in the journal, about short syntheses of research, tutorials about conducting special research methods, or reflections on the field of agricultural education and extension that are likely to invite many reactions. Now that I have given some examples of these papers in the previous issues, you are all invited to send proposals of this kind to the editorial secretariat for review. These manuscripts will of course receive the special attention of the Editorial Committee, and follow a special review procedure. In this issue you will find a regular ‘Editorial’.

In this issue of the *JAEE*, Angela Pachua summarises the articles which are included. The topics of these articles very well explain why the title of the *JAEE* has not changed yet. The topics address:

- knowledge attributes of farmers and the efficiency of farms. In more general terms I would frame this as the relationship between farmer *competence* and farm *performance*. This is a big issue, since worldwide large efforts are made in competence modelling, assessment and development. There is only limited research that shows that investments in competence development lead to better performance at the individual level, let alone at the organisational level;
- skills training in the field of agriculture and natural resource management. Training is sometimes criticised as being too behaviouristic, but next to education and development it is one of the components of human resource development, which agricultural education and extension is all about. And if the human factor is included well, there is nothing wrong with effective training. Without proper training, there would be no top performance;
- factors in decision-making of farmers. Farmers’ deliberations are far more complex than advisors sometimes assume. Seemingly irrational patterns of behaviour have puzzled many and sparked the quest to find out real motives behind seemingly conflicting choices. Experimental psychology is famous for its examples of how various—sometimes unconscious—motives drive behaviour, and recent brain research shows stunning examples of how parts of the brain seem to make autonomous choices, although people say or even believe different things. This is obviously extremely interesting (and dangerous) for marketing, but understanding deeper levels and a wider range of dimensions of human considerations is essential for establishing more profound change of unsustainable practices;
- informal information sources. Informal sources of knowledge are important in the sense that they can support farmers to a great extent. For a long time

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agricultural education was seen as the system that distributed formal knowledge, and agricultural extension as the system that shared informal knowledge with farmers. That distinction however is not fully correct. When agricultural education engages in teaching courses to adult professionals, teachers will learn as much of these professionals as the other way around. Furthermore, agricultural extension has for long been seen as the practice of passing on knowledge that was accumulated by research and which is seen as formal knowledge. By implementing various production practices, extensionists quickly learned what worked and what did not, and that transferring formal knowledge to practice was much more complicated than was foreseen. Communities of practice had a lot of informal knowledge which was equally as important as the knowledge that came from research. The current workplace of farmers is conceptualised as a learning place, and principles of workplace learning are being applied in human resource development consultancy. In many cases it is more efficient to make the workplace more intelligent than to invest in all kinds of courses and training programmes. Competence development initiatives that are embedded in daily work processes can directly influence the realisation of desired performance objectives;

- community extension. In the corporate training world it has been known for quite some time that training effectiveness does not only depend on what the trainee has learned, but also on conditions in the workplace. This includes the organisation of work, the place of the training in work, relationships with colleagues, the involvement of the supervisor of the training, the opportunity to practice, and of course various individual characteristics like, for instance, self-efficacy. Team efforts in training and development often are preferred when it comes to generic issues in the organisation. Furthermore, in underdeveloped farming communities, the mutual interdependency is quite essential, and collective development of a region has much more potential than striving for an individualistic approach. A larger and stronger community that produces certain products has more chances to develop a local or reach a regional market, which will increase the probability of sustaining collective socio-economic development. This cooperative approach is well-known in agriculture (for producers, retailers and consumers, not only in the dairy, horticulture and floriculture sector, but also in the energy, housing, insurance and care sector), but a sound balance with the competitive approach is needed, as there is always a trade-off between the cooperative and the competitive approach in any social context. Coalitions between competitors are being forged to defeat other competition on the one hand, but on the other hand cooperatives are being built up to develop or retain a competitive advantage, and within cooperatives there again can be quite some competition between the members.

The *JAEE* seems to attract manuscripts that reflect important current issues in science, which relate to education, communication and innovation in rural development. This has been the case even without a name change in this direction for the journal. The situation regarding the name of the journal is that the Editorial Committee, after long debates and consultations in the Editorial Advisory Board, decided to change the name, but the Publisher has strong reservations against this,

as it could influence the pending process of the inclusion of the journal in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). The Editorial Committee has had its reservations as well, as changing the name of the journal in fact means that we will start a new title, with consequences for accessing the previous journal using search engines and library systems. So we will leave the title of the journal as it is for 2013. We will definitely come back to this issue during the course of the year.

Regarding possible inclusion of the *JAEE* in the SSCI, and receiving an impact factor, it is interesting to note that we have screened the bibliometric performance of the journal using the program Publish or Perish (which can be downloaded for free). The *Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension (JAEE)* currently has an H-index of 27. This means that the journal has published 27 articles which have been cited 27 times or more. The H-index can also be computed for individual scientists, and a Publish or Perish H-index of 27 would be regarded as high. There are other systems that compute the H-index, Web of Science being the most stringent as it only includes references to the Web of Science databases (such as the Science Citation Index and the Social Science Citation Index), Scopus is a bit more general, and Google Citations and Publish or Perish the most inclusive. Publish or Perish moreover uses the Google Citations database, so analyses performed with Publish or Perish leads to identical results as when using Google Citations. Our sister journal, the *Journal of International Agricultural Extension and Education (JIAEE)* currently has an H-index of 18. Active cross-referencing would help both journals to increase their H-index.

If we further compare the H-index of journals which were recently included in the SSCI by Thomson Reuters, the Dutch journal *Pedagogische Studiën* currently has a H-index of 7 and *Vocations and Learning* of 10. Of course we do not know how fast they will climb the H-index ladder. The maximum H-index of a journal in the field of education and educational research is around 175. The journal with the lowest H-index scores around 7. We can divide the journals based on their H-index into four quartiles, Q1 being the top quartile, and Q4 being the bottom quartile. The cut-off point between Q3 and Q4 is an H-index of 40. The *JAEE* is thus in the upper half of Q4, and the journals just mentioned that recently made it into the SSCI are in the lower half. Therefore, I do not see a reason as to why the *JAEE* would not be included in the SSCI when it is reviewed again by Thomson Reuters.

In the domain of planning and development, the maximum H-index is around 80. The minimum is around 24. That means that the *JAEE* in this science field is just above the bottom of Q4. Nevertheless, based on these figures I would say that the *JAEE* should be included in the SSCI, also given its steep rise in citations during the last couple of years.

Coming back to the name change of the *JAEE*: the *JAEE* will not give up on agricultural education and extension as the field is again receiving more attention. This is especially a result of societal attention for sustainable food security, food safety and poverty alleviation, and thus the relationships between food, health, lifestyle and livelihoods. Wageningen (as the origin of the *JAEE*) will again host a number of conferences in the near future in the field of agricultural education and extension. Preparations are underway for the Europea conference in 2013. Europea is the European Association of Agricultural Educators. Other initiatives are also being discussed and I will report on those in later issues. Important in this respect is our

relationship with the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education (AIAEE).

Regarding the AIAEE, this association publishes the *JIAEE* mentioned above. The *JAEE* and the *JIAEE* have an arrangement that the editor of the *JIAEE* is an associate editor of the *JAEE*, and the editor of the *JAEE* is a world representative of the *JIAEE*. Dr Kim Dooley of the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications of Texas A&M University silently left the associate editorship of the *JAEE* as a new editor of the *JIAEE* was elected. We sincerely thank Kim for her efforts for both the *JIAEE* and the *JAEE*. The newly elected editor of the *JIAEE* is Dr Brenda Seevers of the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education of New Mexico State University. We wish Brenda lots of success with her position in the *JIAEE* and as associate editor of the *JAEE*.

There has been another silent change in the staff that supports the *JAEE*, Dr Mostafa Karbasioun stepped down as Book Review Editorial Assistant and Journal Review Editor. He has been active in this role up to Volume 18. We thank Mostafa for his dedication to the *JAEE* and the efforts he has made with the book and journal reviews and we wish him success for the future. His successor is Worku Tuffa Birru, who is a PhD student from Ethiopia at Wageningen University. I do not have to introduce his work as readers of the *JAEE* will have noted his valuable contributions to the *JAEE* since the beginning of 2012. We also wish Worku success with his role within the *JAEE*.

MARTIN MULDER, Editor