

Evaluation of Mid-Year Review of 2014 Seminars: A case study of the CSIR-Water Research Institute, Ghana

Marian A. Jiagge *

CSIR- Water Research Institute , P. O. Box AH 38, Achimota, Ghana

Isaac O. A. Hodgson

CSIR- Water Research Institute, P. O. Box AH 38, Achimota, Ghana

Sylvia Amponsah

CSIR- Water Research Institute, P. O. Box AH 38, Achimota, Ghana;

Benson K. Owusu

CSIR- Water Research Institute, P. O. Box AH 38, Achimota, Ghana;

Thomas Adom

CSIR- Water Research Institute, P. O. Box AH 38, Achimota, Ghana;

The research is financed by CSIR-Water Research Institute

Abstract

Scientific seminars are organized to provide forum for participants to discuss and also bring into the public domain current activities of an organization. To ascertain whether the seminars are achieving its aim, evaluation is usually done to assess the effectiveness. It is against this background that Water Research Institute of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research organized 2014 mid-year seminar to review its research activities as well as communicate findings of research undertaken by its scientist for the year under review. Hence, the main thrust of this paper is to evaluate the success of 2014 mid-year review seminar. The evaluation for the purposes of quality assurance and future organization of similar seminars were conducted using descriptive statistics analysis of the evaluation questionnaire. The results of the study revealed that 71% of the participants were males while 29% of them were females. Most of the respondents were of the view that the topics presented were relevant and the overall performance of the seminar was good as it was in line with the objectives of the institute, that is, to generate and provide scientific information.

Keywords: CSIR-Water Research Institute, Scientific Seminars, Scientific Information

1. Introduction

In today's complex and environments, and with increasing numbers of environmental, developmental and health challenges require that scientist and the general public once a while need to collaborate effectively in ensuring that sound scientific solutions are found to myriads of problems facing mankind (Zwarenstein et al., 2009; CAIPE, 2002).

These seminars are intended to build upon discipline specific capabilities and competencies among the different professionals invited to share their research findings. Thus, seminars are indispensable resources for the different presenters and the audiences that can be used to support the development of inter-professional education initiatives (Gordon, 2006).

In order to maximize gains from the learning process that takes place within seminars and workshops, there is the need to evaluate each seminar using different evaluation methods that are appropriate for the type of learning outcome the seminar desired.

It is against this background that, study was undertaken to assess views of research scientists and all the stakeholders who participated in 2014 mid-year review seminar for CSIR-Water Research Institute.

2. Methodology

Sampling technique adopted in this survey was random sampling techniques. A semi-structured questionnaire was developed and administered to both the research scientists and the invited stakeholders. The semi-structured questionnaires had 23 items (22 items had a three-point responses that the participants were supposed to choose from, and 1 item for free text comments). Of the 22 items, 6 items related to learning success and quality of slides, 7 items related to knowledge gains, 9 items related to general seminar features/organization. These forms were administered directly after the seminar by a team from the Commercial and Information Division of the Institute. The data obtained from the questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Gender of participants

Out of the total number of participants that the questionnaire was administered to, 71% was male and 29% female, which show that the participation of women was low (see fig. 1.0 below). This is owing to the fact that most females shy away from science as a subject in the country. The number of females that attended is slightly higher than the about 22% of female that study science in the Ghanaian university (Andam, 2004).

3.2 Time allotted to presenters (15minutes)

As shown in fig. 2.0 below, 71% out of the total number of those who completed the forms were of the view that the time allotted to the presenters was adequate. While 4% suggested that the 15 minutes duration for the presentation was not adequate, 22% of the participants suggested that 15mins should be reviewed to 20-30 minutes. 3% of the total number of participants did not answer the question. Typical time allotted for presentation in international conferences and national conferences for example the Ghana Science Association are 5 mins and 10 mins respectively. The time allocated (15 mins) is slightly more than the time allocated for the Ghana Science Association Biennial Conference which is 10 mins (GSA, 2013).

3.3 It was easy to understand the presentations

Participants (refer to fig. 3 below) were of the view that the presentations were not too technical, they understood the presentations with just a few clarifications needed. This could be due to the fact that most presenters stressed the practical aspect of their research work and its significance.

3.4 The audience contributed meaningfully to the discussion

The participants believed that they contributed meaningfully during the discussion time, in suggesting ideas to research scientists, since the questions and suggestions were all related to the presentations. The contributions to the research work were well accepted by the presenters (see fig. 4).

3.5 Relevance of projects presented to the socio-economic development of Ghana

The presentations were relevant to the socio-economic development of Ghana as well as in line with the objectives of the Institute, that is, to generate and provide scientific information, and services especially in the agriculture, health, industry, energy, transportation, education and tourism sectors. The presentations covered most of the afore-mentioned sectors (see fig. 5).

3.6 The chairpersons highlighted areas that needed to be considered

The participants agreed that the chairpersons gave input as to how the research scientists could reshape their presentation and research work and directed them in their future work (see fig. 6).

3.7 The choice of refreshment was good and sufficient

Participants enjoyed the refreshment given them after the presentations were done. What was served is the standard quality of refreshment (snacks) served in the big hotels in the country, for example, Golden Tulip Hotel (fig. 7).

3.8 Valuation of the in-house research activity

In general, the participants were of the view that the organisation of the mid-year review was a good one as the objectives were met. All the presenters welcomed the contributions from the chairpersons and participants (fig. 8).

4. CONCLUSION

The presentations were good, the Researchers were able to bring out what they wanted to impart to the stakeholders. The participants were impressed with the Mid-Year Review meeting. The Chairman highlighted on areas to improve the research activities of the various Researchers.

5. RECOMMENDATION

It was recommended that steps should be taken to increase the number of participation of women. Some participants also suggested that the review should be conducted twice in the year to increase the awareness of the Institute and its activities to the general public. As well as update the stakeholders on their current research work and findings.

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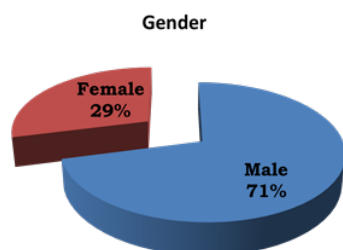


Fig. 3.1 Gender of respondents

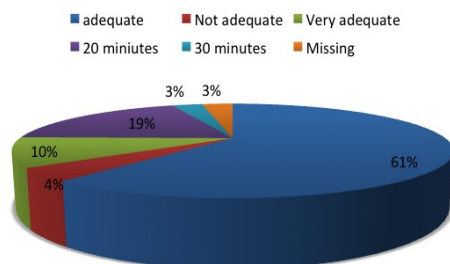


Fig. 3.2 Time for presentation

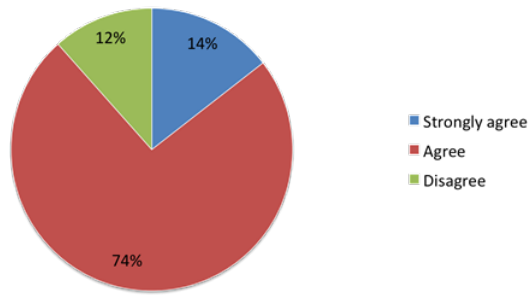


Fig. 3.3 Respondents' understanding of presentation

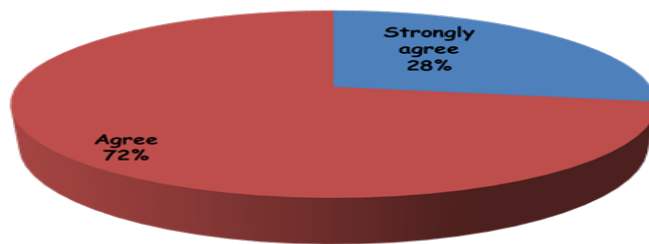


Fig. 3.4 Audience participation in discussion

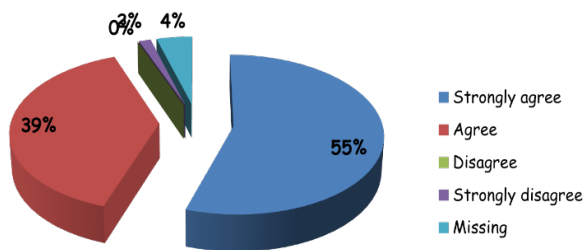


Fig. 3.5 Relevance of topics presented

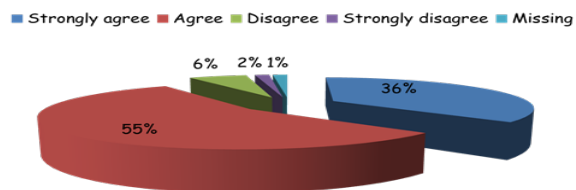


Fig. 3.6 Chairperson highlighted areas for discussion

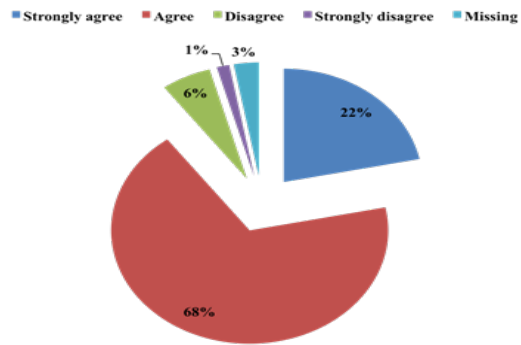


Fig. 3.7 The choice of refreshment

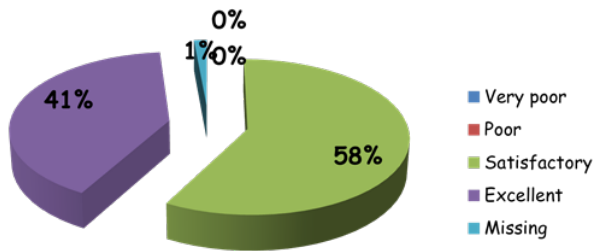


Fig. 3.8 Overall evaluation of the in-house review by respondents