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Client's Satisfaction and its Predictors with Delivery of Veterinary Services in Peri-Urban Area in North Western Ethiopia

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Abstract

Client satisfaction in veterinary service is seen as a desired outcome of veterinary services to assess the quality of health care for livestock. Hence, the objective of this study was to assess the perceived levels of customer satisfaction with veterinary service rendered inperi-urban areas, in North Western Ethiopia. In this study, a cross-sectional survey was undertaken from August to December 2018 with the purpose of assessing satisfaction of farmers/clients towards veterinary services in the study area. Multi-stage sampling technique was applied for selecting study districts and kebeles. Simple random sampling was used to select individual household veterinary services clients. A total of 422household service users were interviewed from three districts. The collected data was entered into Microsoft's Excel spreadsheet and analyzed by using the SPSS version 20.0. Statistical significance was taken at P–value ≤ 0.05 as cut of the point. The overall client satisfaction and dissatisfaction level with the veterinary health services in the study area was 24.88% and 75.12% respectively. Furthermore, satisfaction with the veterinary clinic service was found to have a significant association with service availability, service quality/ effectiveness, client needs met, vaccine availability, getting help, awareness campaign, consultancy service on animal husbandry practices and in-time availability of veterinary officers those. In conclusion, the survey analysis indicated that poor veterinary service clients' satisfaction in northwestern Ethiopia and hence the veterinary service management should undertake this weak service and plan for a better service delivery.

Keywords: Ethiopia • Small holder farmer • Satisfaction • Veterinary clinic

About the Study

Livestock production in Ethiopia has a significant contribution to the overall national economy that accounts for approximately 45% of the total agricultural GDP. Livestock provides a major a contribution to agriculture through draft power, manure, fuel, and as a fertilizer. Animal products such as meat, milk, eggs and poultry provide the population of Ethiopia with a daily cash income and a much-needed source of nutrition, which the country has a high prevalence of malnutrition. For rural smallholders, livestock also performs important economic functions as repositories of household savings, as assets that provide interest-free credit, and as insurance to mitigate risk. Notwithstanding the immense role of livestock in the lives and livelihoods of rural households, the production potential of the animals is limited due to various reasons such as inadequate nutrition, poor genetic potential, high prevalence of animal disease and other management related problems. Critical among such constraints is insufficient animal health care support. Limited support

for the livestock health services has a negative effect on livestock productivity in the country. For instance, the annual mortality of livestock due to diseases ranges 13-47% depending on livestock species and 30-50% of production loss. The problem is chronic due to insufficient government budget allocation to animal health care systems in the country. The private veterinary service delivery is limited in Ethiopia due to the dominance of subsistent farmers (unable to pay for veterinary services), and a shortfall in well trained extension personnel.

The importance of veterinary health service is not only to sustain and improve livestock production, but also to protect and improve human health. Therefore, providing quality animal health care services is also essential for human health and nutrition enhancement. Nevertheless, the delivery of quality veterinary service remains under major challenges in developing countries. An important reason for the limited success in quality veterinary service delivery is the presence of unknown factors in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to University of California study effective services are

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delivered if only the services are consistent with the needs and objectives of the customer. However, livestock technical staff often places much emphasis on the technical aspects of production with little attention to the actual needs and objectives of subsistent farmer. Various studies conducted in Sub-Saharan African countries suggest that managing livestock including veterinary service use is influenced by social and economic factors as well as farm-related variables. Similarly, a study conducted in Ghana by Turkson suggests that farmer and non-farmer characteristics influence farmers' satisfaction in veterinary services.

Customer satisfaction evaluation studies are important to identify the causes and challenges that led to customer dissatisfaction and to eliminate them in the future. Such information is important for customizing and developing rural farmer-relevant veterinary service support programs. It also allows managers to take decisions on the direction and content of veterinary services. An understanding of such factors can help in evaluating veterinary service intervention strategies for small holder farmers. To the best of our knowledge, there are no studies describing veterinary service utilization among livestock farmers in Ethiopia. There is a need for a comprehensive analysis of the veterinary needs of livestock farmers which explicitly accounts for the effect of socio-economic and farm-related factors influencing farmers to participate and satisfy in veterinary services in North West Ethiopia. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the determinants of participation in veterinary service, client satisfaction, and health services delivery of veterinary clinics in preurban areas of North Western Ethiopia.

Theoretical Framework

A structured questionnaire was administered to generate information on the existing veterinary clinical service delivery and the possible associated risk factors, and other valuable information. The questionnaire was framed in such a way that farmers could give information that is recent and easy to recall, and it was filled directly by interviewing selected farmers from different villages of 6 kebels. The data were collected by experienced animal health assistants, and the supervisors were veterinarians. The data collectors (five animal health technicians) and supervisors (four doctors of veterinary medicine) were trained for one day before data collection. The independent variables /explanatory variables adopted for the study was based on previous studies those used to measure service quality. Variables those measures veterinary service quality in five dimensions: Tangibles, Empathy, Assurance, Reliability and Responsiveness were evaluated according to client expectations.

Methodology

The data were analyzed using SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and means were used to describe the data. Test was used to generate predictors of service satisfaction. The indicators having a significant P-value(≤ 0.05) at the 95 % confidence level were considered as factors. Regarding service accessibility, about 27% and 28% of the veterinary service clients rated the level of satisfaction as poor and good, respectively, whilenearly two-fifth of the respondents (38%) reported to have not satisfied with veterinary clinical services. Clients were satisfactory in veterinary service of their need where met 38(9.0) and 22(5.21)

satisfactory though the need was not meeting. Also lower veterinary service satisfaction was recorded in parameters of; vaccine availability (36.26%),getting help (29.86%), awareness campaign (24.17%), consultancy service on animal husbandry practices (24.88%) and in-time availability of veterinary officers (40.52%).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study has revealed that the overall satisfaction level of veterinary service clients with the services rendered at periurbanarea; in North-Western Ethiopia was 24.88% and this is lower than reports from other studies conducted in North Gondar, Ethiopia, showed 37.7% of farmers were satisfied. In conclusion, this study was assessing the perceived levels of clients' satisfaction with veterinary service rendered at peri-urban areas was very low. The most likely predictor for client dissatisfaction were service un availability, poor quality/effectiveness service, not met the client needs, vaccine un availability, difficult of getting help and not in-time availability of veterinary officers. Hence, there is a need of regional livestock agency understand the extent of the problem and reinforce satisfactory veterinary service delivery through regular monitoring and analysis. Veterinary officers not only concentrate on treatment of animals but also on extension activities like consultancy service for scientific animal husbandry practices and awareness campaign about disease outbreak and prevention, zoonosis, foodborne infection, etc. to make animal production profitable and prevent public health risks.

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