

Level Of Extension Agents' Motivation And Effectiveness In Abia State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT: Motivation is known to affect effectiveness of workers; but the level of extension agents' motivation and how this has affected their effectiveness in Abia state is apparently unknown. A study was, therefore, conducted to determine the effect of motivation on effectiveness of extension agents in Abia State, Nigeria. Two blocks were selected from each of the three zones in the state at the first stage, giving total of 6 blocks. The second stage involved the selection of two sub-circles from each of the 6 blocks selected, giving a total of 12 extension sub-circles. At the third stage, 10 extension agents from each of the sub-circles were randomly selected, giving a sample size of 120 extension agents. The data for the study was collected with use of a structured questionnaire. The extension agents' level of motivation and effectiveness were measured with the aid of a 5 point Likert rating scale. Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics used were the mean, frequencies and the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient, which was used to determine the coefficient of correlation "r". The inferential statistic used was the t-test of significance of relationship. The study found a significant relationship between the level of motivation and effectiveness of extension agents. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between the level of motivation and effectiveness of extension agents was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis accepted at 95% confidence level and 119 degrees of freedom.

KEY WORDS: Extension, agent, motivation, effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that the motivation of workers, both in private and public organizations, leads to a greater efficiency and effectiveness of workers, leading to higher productivity. To motivate means to encourage to do something, or behave in a particular manner. Motivation is the performance or procedure of presenting an intention that leads a person to capture some accomplishment (Quratul, 2011). As the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) seeks to improve extension agents' effectiveness, a challenge exists towards achieving the overall objective of the organization, and that is, provision of adequate motivational incentives to the extension agents to meet organizational goals. In a world characterized by competition, consumer satisfaction and the need for speed and flexibility in order to get results, managers have to depend on their employees to actualize their dreams (Storey, 2001). Motivation is seen as a means of getting workers more committed to work assiduously towards the attainment of organizational goals. This is predicated on the fact that when an individual's needs are satisfied, he is less distracted in struggling to meet personal needs as no worker would put optimum performance when his personal needs are not met. Maslow, in his theory, succinctly illustrated the hierarchy of needs of people. The most important needs are at the base, while the less important are at the top, and as an individual satisfies the needs at the top, there is self fulfillment leading to attainment of one's highest potentials at work.

In his theory McGregor developed two distinct preconceived perceptions of how people observe human behavior at work and organizational life. He believed that companies follow one of the two opposing approaches. He called these approaches theory X and theory Y. McGregor argued that in theory X, management has the responsibility to ensure that the productive elements of the enterprise are organized, such as money, materials and people with the purpose of meeting economic ends. People have an inborn dislike to work and tend to avoid it whenever an opportunity arises. They are born selfish; indifferent to the needs of the organization; hence people's efforts need to be directed through coercion, controlling their actions and modification of their behaviors so as to attain organizational goals. People would, therefore, always need to be directed to take responsibility. This theory further posits that due to the inherent nature of human beings, they are not able to perform well on their own initiative. In order to make people to achieve organizational objectives, they need to be persuaded, rewarded, coerced, controlled, directed or threatened with punishment, he concluded. On the other hand, theory Y stipulates that management is charged with the responsibility to organize the elements of productive enterprise such as money, materials, equipment and people with the aim of meeting economic ends. Work is a natural thing to workers; they are not passive or resistant to organizational needs; and are always ready to express self-direction when committed to the objectives because people are naturally not lazy. Unlike theory X, Y stipulates that employees accept and seek responsibility at all times. However the only way management can ensure that people are committed is to provide them with the right conditions and operational methods to enable them achieve their goals through the direction of their efforts to meet objectives of the organization. This implies that extension agents would perform effectively when under good working conditions (Boeree, 2006). Extension agents would not function effectively except their personal and collective needs are met. The determinants to one's action predict one's performance. These determinants include one's ability and motivation, which lead to attainment of personal goals. Extension agents' motivational intensity has to be high and sustained in order to attain effectiveness and sustain it

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(Majoyinola, 2002), It is believed, therefore, that if the extension agents in the study area are properly motivated, they would reach their greatest potentials at work, that is, they would be very effective. However, the level of motivation of extension agents in the study area is apparently unknown as well as how the level of motivation provided has impacted on their effectiveness. On the basis of the above, the study makes a critical analysis of the level of motivation and how it has influenced effectiveness of extension agents in Abia State.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study area, Abia State, comprises of three agricultural zones namely: Aba, Umuahia and Ohafia zones. It lies between latitude $40^{\circ} - 70^{\circ}\text{N}$ and $70^{\circ} - 80^{\circ}\text{E}$ of the Equator and Greenwich meridian respectively. The population of study comprised all agricultural extension agents in Abia State Agricultural Development Programme. In selecting the sample for the study, stratified random sampling technique was used. In doing this, the state was stratified into 3 zones. Two blocks were selected from each of the three zones in the state, at the first state, giving total of 6 blocks. The second stage involved the selection of two sub circles from each of the 6 blocks selected, giving a total of 12 extension sub-circles. At the third stage, 10 extension agents from each of the sub-circles were randomly selected, giving a sample size of 120 extension agents. Data was collected with the use of interview schedule / structured questionnaire. Extension agents' level of motivation and effectiveness were measured with the aid of a 5 point Likert rating scale as follows: strongly agree (SA) =5, agree (A) =4, undecided (UD) =3, disagree (D) =2, and strongly disagree (SD) =1. The sum of the values add up to 15, which gives a mean of 3 when divided by 5. The cut off point for agree response is 3.05 which is the upper limit of the mean score "3" (undecided). The mean was further modified thus, < 2 = very ineffective/very poor motivation, $2-3.05$ = ineffective/poor motivation, $3.06 - 4$ = moderate effectiveness/fairly motivated, and >4 = very effective/ well motivated. Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive statistics, such as the mean, frequency, Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient, and inferential statistic, the t-test of significance of relationship. The t-test for significance 'r' (coefficient of correlation) was used to test the null hypothesis at 95% confidence level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of level of extension agents' motivation presented in Table 1 shows that extension agents were highly motivated through salary advance ($\bar{x} = 4.63$) and job security ($\bar{x} = 4.26$), while the following indicators showed fairly high motivation: regular payment of salary ($\bar{x} = 3.97$), regular promotion ($\bar{x} = 3.87$), reward for good performance ($\bar{x} = 3.59$), job satisfaction ($\bar{x} = 3.46$), and regular payment of transport allowance ($\bar{x} = 3.2$). The rest of the indicators showed poor or very poor motivation with rent subsidy and payment of meal subsidy taking the rear. The result from Table 2 shows that most of the performance indicators of effectiveness used to assess extension agents, indicated that extension agents were very effective in the following areas: organization of research – extension - farmer input linkage activities ($\bar{x} = 4.48$), organization of result demonstration ($\bar{x} = 4.43$), organization of method

demonstration ($\bar{x} = 4.43$), holding scheduled meetings ($\bar{x} = 4.30$), supervision ($\bar{x} = 4.28$), creating awareness of extension service ($\bar{x} = 4.17$), organization of field days ($\bar{x} = 4.08$), farmer training ($\bar{x} = 4.05$), organization of method/result demonstrations ($\bar{x} = 4.02$), They were fairly or moderately effective in the following areas: distribution of pamphlets, leaflets and posters ($\bar{x} = 3.82$), visiting farmers ($\bar{x} = 3.72$), organizing field meetings regularly ($\bar{x} = 3.76$), organization of audio-visual shows ($\bar{x} = 3.53$) and participation of farmers in On- Farm Adaptive Research - OFAR ($\bar{x} = 3.31$). No effectiveness indicator recorded poor or low effectiveness. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between the level of motivation and effectiveness of extension agents was rejected, and the alternative which stated there that there is a significant relationship between the level of motivation and effectiveness of extension agents was accepted.

Table 1: Mean ratings of the level of motivation of extension agents

Motivation Variables	SA	A	UD	D	SD	∑fx	Mean
Regular promotion	55	22	23	12	8	464	3.87*
Regular payment of rent subsidy	20	10	5	35	50	275	2.29
High Job security	47	61	8	4	—	511	4.26**
Regular payment of salary	51	42	7	12	8	476	3.97*
Availability of vehicle purchase loan	5	14	43	53	5	321	2.67
Regular payment of transportation allowance	12	22	67	16	3	384	3.2*
Payment of meal subsidy	10	18	12	5	75	243	2.03
payment of salary advance	85	25	10	-	-	555	4.63**
Reward for good performance	61	9	10	20	20	431	3.59*
Job satisfaction	50	26	8	36	-	415	3.46*

Grand mean 3.98

** High motivation

*Moderate motivation

Table 2: Extension agents' level of effectiveness

Effectiveness Indicators	V.E (f)	E (f)	UD (f)	IE (f)	V.IE (f)	∑fx	Mean
Creating awareness of extension service	45	65	10	—	—	500	4.29**
Organizing field meetings regularly	15	81	14	10	—	443	3.76*
Organizing field days	21	88	11	—	—	490	4.08**
Organizing of method/result demonstration	22	78	20	—	—	482	4.02**
Visiting farmers	34	18	68	—	—	446	3.72*
Holding scheduled meetings	49	58	13	—	—	516	4.3**
Organization of result demonstration	55	62	3	—	—	532	4.43**
Organization of method of demonstration	46	74	—	—	—	526	4.38**
Organization of audio-visual shows	32	49	11	18	10	423	3.53*
Organization of research- extension-farmer linkages	83	22	5	10	—	538	4.48**
Participation of farmers OFAR	20	40	17	43	—	397	3.31*
Distribution of pamphlets, leaflets, posters etc.	24	66	14	16	—	458	3.82*
Farmer training	22	78	16	4	—	48.6	4.05**
Supervision	57	43	16	4	—	513	4.28**
Overall mean response	4.02						

*effective

**Very effective

Table 2: Analysis of significance of relationship between motivation and effectiveness

X	Y	N	R	t-cal	P ≤ 0.05
Motivation	Effectiveness	120	0.92	7.26**	1.96

**Very significant

Decision: Null hypothesis rejected

Table 2 shows the analysis of significance of relationship between motivation and effectiveness. The correlation coefficient (r) of 0.92 was found to be significant at 95% confidence level (p ≤ 0.05). On extension effectiveness, the study further revealed that organization of On-Farm Adaptive Research (OFAR) recorded the lowest level of effectiveness. This finding agrees with another study, which reported that farmer - training and Farming Systems Research (FSR) activities such as OFAR / OFAT (On-Farm Adaptive Trials) were the weak links in extension delivery in Nigeria (Agbarevo, 2005). In the same vein, other studies have shown that extension delivery has recorded poor performance with regard to technology dissemination, especially in farming systems research and farmer-training programmes. This could be attributed in part to:

- the researchers inadequate consideration of externalities and the substantial resources that would be needed for it to keep pace with the dynamics of farming systems;

- scientist being inadequately prepared for face-to-face dialogue with farmers, and
- researchers' tendency to dominate the design, content, conduct and evaluation of on-farm testing (Amalu; Uzzah in Agbarevo, 2013).

Furthermore, in support of the finding of the study regarding the not impressive performance of extension delivery in research-extension-farmer linkage activities in the study area, other studies have shown that poor participation of farmers in research-extension-farmer linkage activities, which is a veritable means of technology dissemination is attributable to top-down approach in contrast to participatory approach to mainstream the resource-poor farmers into research-extension activities (Morris cited in Igbokwe and Enwere , 2001; Agbarevo and Obinne , 2010). The findings of the study as they affect motivation, show that the extension agents in the area of study were fairly motivated, and would therefore be expected to be effective

in doing their work. The relatively high level of effectiveness of extension agents as found by the study shows that extension agents are very dedicated to their work. It was interesting to observe that most of the extension agents reported being happy doing their job and would not leave for another. The reason for this can be partly explained by the fact that being effective is not necessarily a product of rewards or motivation but is induced by the interest one has in a particular job (Kohn, 2014) . He further posited that intrinsic interest in a task, that is, the sense that something is worth doing for its own sake, typically declines when someone is rewarded for doing it. This is also consistent with McGregor's theory Y, which posited that people have natural tendency to work, and are not passive or resistant to organizational needs; they are always ready to express self-direction when committed to the attainment of the goals of the organization because people are naturally not lazy. The result of correlation between motivation and effectiveness, which shows that motivation positively correlates with effectiveness of extension agents in the state implies that extension agents' level of effectiveness would increase with greater motivation.

CONCLUSION

The study found a positive correlation between motivation and extension effectiveness although the level of motivation was lower than effectiveness. The paper concludes that increased motivation would lead to increased effectiveness. This would strengthen the areas of weakness, which included distribution of pamphlets, leaflets and posters, visiting farmers, organizing field meetings regularly, organization of audio-visual shows and participation of farmers in OFAR. Based on the findings of the study, the paper recommends greater motivation of extension personnel for greater effectiveness of extension delivery. The use of participatory approach to mainstream the resource-poor farmers into research-extension activities for improved overall performance is equally recommended. This would increase the overall effectiveness and efficiency of extension delivery for improved food production.

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