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Role Perception and Job Satisfaction Among Extension Workers In Nasarawa Agricultural Development Programme (NADP) of Nasarawa State, Nigeria

****Ibrahim, H., *Muhammad, D. M., **Yahaya, H and **Luka, E.G**

***Nasarawa Agricultural Development Programme (NADP), Lafia Nasarawa State**

****Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension Nasarawa State University Keffi,
PMB 135 Lafia, Nasarawa State Nigeria.**

Corresponding E- Mail: Hassibrahim@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study assessed the level of role perception and job satisfaction among extension workers of Nasarawa Agricultural Development Programme (NADP). Data for the study were collected through structured questionnaire administered on 60 extension workers. The findings of the study indicated that the extension workers considered their role as important (mean = 3.68). Knowing the technology (mean = 4.06) and communication of the technology to the farmers (mean = 4.00) were perceived as the most important role of the extension workers. The extension workers were also satisfied with their job (mean = 4.16). The major job related factors contributing to the level of satisfaction were fulfillment as extension workers, involvement in special extension activities, length of stay in current station and government funding. There was a significant relationship between job satisfaction and payment of allowances, rate of promotion, regular training and level of education of extension workers. The study recommends that regular promotion and training of extension workers should be maintained and funding of the extension service should be improved upon.

Keywords: *Role perception, Job satisfaction, Extension workers, Agricultural Development Programme*

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural Extension has often been conceptualized as an education process, which promotes learning. It uses the combined findings of biological sciences and the principles of social science to bring about changes in knowledge, skills, attitude and practices in an out of school setting (Ilevbaaje 2004). Eremie (2005) postulated that an agricultural extension service has a lot to play in ensuring that Nigeria achieves the Millenium development goals. It was these perceived important roles of agricultural extension that informed the establishment of the Agricultural Development Programme (ADPs). With the re-organization and strengthening of the extension services of the ADPs, along training and visits lines in 1987, a number of activities were initiated so as to ensure that the seven features of the trainings and visits are implemented. These have led to a change in the roles performed by the extension workers thereby resulting in some level of satisfaction among both extension workers and their clients (Olukosi *et al.*, 1993). It is also worth noting that despite the tremendous achievements of the agricultural sector in Nigeria, the ADPs

have been besotted by a myriad of problems, especially with the terminal end of the counterpart funding by the World Bank. These problems range from the non-availability of facilities necessary for effective implementation and functioning of Extension Workers to poorly motivated staff resulting in low morale, low level of role perception and poor performance of extension workers (Banmeke and Ajayi 2005). Chikwendu *et al.*, (1997) noted that in recent years, there have been indications of ineffectiveness in the extension services of the ADPs. The goal of every manager is to increase production and efficiency to obtain maximum results for the organization. Motivation for better performance depends on job satisfaction, achievement, recognition and professional growth (Bouyett and Bouyett, 2000).

A Study by Child (1972), has shown the influence of role perception of extension workers in determining actions. A workers perception of the organizational goals is his estimates of the region into which he thinks the order of the organization would like things to move (Oyedijo, 1983). Unfavorable outcomes from the organizational goals probably due to low role perception may lower the level of aspiration and satisfaction of an employee and thereby, creating conflict between him and the organization (Banmeke and Ajayi, 2005). Motivation has been noted to be imperative in ensuring job satisfaction which is considered as a pro-active human resource management strategy (Olorunfoba and Ajayi, 2003). The level of job satisfaction will invariably affect the performance of the extension agents which would indirectly impact on agricultural production. Based on the foregoing, it is imperative to (i) ascertain the level of role perception and (ii) determine the level of job satisfaction as well as the factors that determine job satisfaction and among extension workers of Nasarawa Agricultural Development Programme. It is expected that the findings of the study will help to improve the extension service delivery in Nasarawa state, other states in Nigeria and the countries of the West African sub region at large.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Role refers to responsibility, obligation or expected behavior attached to any social position (Ekong, 1988). Perception is a process by which people select, organize and interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. It is a process which gets structured, organized and modified as the individual matures (Norman *et al.*, 1982). Role perception can have a definite impact on performance (Gibson *et al.*, 1982). Extension agents have been found to differ in perception and performance of their roles (Akinbode, 1971). The attitude, motive and behavior which ultimately become hallmarks of each individuals personality rest upon the process of perception and upon it. The process of perception and thought provide an employee with true verifiable information about an organization. An organizational goal is a shared goal for the organization on the part of the leaders. Goal is used here to denote a region of positive valence (Oyedijo, 1983). Job connotes responsibility,

duty, task and or paid position of a regular or part time payment (Hornby and Cowie, 1995). Satisfaction refers to a feeling of pleasure, the attainment of wants and needs, action of fulfilling desires and demand (Hornby and Cowie, 1995). Job satisfaction for extension workers connotes the type of task and the feeling of attainment or fulfillment while performing duties as extension agents responsible for disseminating proven agricultural technologies. Role perception and job satisfaction connotes the feeling of attainment or fulfillment by extension workers while performing their assigned tasks. Motivation has been noted to be imperative in ensuring job satisfaction which is considered as a pro-active human resource management strategy (Oloruntoba and Ajayi, 2003).

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Nasarawa State. The State was created from Plateau State on 1st October, 1996. It has a land mass of 27,118Km² consisting of 13 Local Government Area (LGAs) and 16 Development Areas (DAs). The State is located in the North Central Geo-Political Region of Nigeria. It shares borders with Plateau, Benue, Taraba, Kogi, Kaduna States and the Federal Capital Territory – Abuja. It lies between latitude 7⁰ and 9⁰ North and longitude 7⁰ and 10⁰ East of the Equator and Meridian respectively. The State Capital is Lafia. The State which is located in the Guinea Savannah vegetation belt is primarily an agrarian one with over 80% of the population engaged in Agriculture. The State has a population of 1,224,116 (NPC, 1991). The arable land area is 746,826 Hectares. The State has annual rainfall that range between 1250mm – 2000mm. The mean temperature range from 25⁰C in October to about 36⁰C in March. The soils are generally fertile and range from sandy loam, loam and silty loam. The commonly practiced cropping system is mixed cropping. The major crops cultivated in the State include both rainfed and irrigated crops such as Maize, Millet, Rice, Cassava, Yam, Sweet potatoes, Bennisseed, Melon, Okro, Tomatoes, Pepper, Sugarcane, Mangoes, Citrus, Cashew, Bananas, Plantain, Palm Trees, and various forestry trees (NADP 2005).

The population for the study was the extension workers (EWs) of NADP. The total number of Extension Workers in the State is 238, however 20 Extension Workers consisting of Block Extension Supervisors, Block Extension Agents, Subject Matter Specialists and Village Extension Agents were randomly selected from each of the 3 NADP Zones in the State. Therefore a total of 60 Extension Workers were interviewed for the Study. Primary data was used for the study and was collected with the aid of a structured questionnaire that was administered to the respondents (Extension Workers) by one of the authors during the month of November 2006. The role perception scale which was developed by Patel (1983) and used by Ajayi (1999) was adopted to estimate the level of role perception of the extension workers. Each of the EWs was asked to indicate his/her perceived importance for 12 role items on a three point likert type scale. The three points scale was weighted in order

of importance, not important at all = 1-2.99; important = 3-3.99; very important = 4-5.00 The mean perception score for each of the role items was calculated and the grand mean role perception score of all the items was divided by the number of role items to determine the role perception level. A job satisfaction scale that was developed and used by Banmeke and Ajayi (2005) was used to estimate the level of job satisfaction. The EWs were asked to rate 18 items that affect job satisfaction on a 5 point rating scale of very satisfied = 5 points, satisfied = 4 points, undecided = 3 points, unsatisfied = 2 points, and very unsatisfied = 1 point. The mean satisfaction score of all the items were calculated. The level of job satisfaction was determined by dividing the grand mean satisfaction score of all the items by the number of items. A multiple regression analysis was used to identify the determinants of job satisfaction. The linear form of the regression model was expressed in the implicit form as follows; $Y = F(X_1 X_2 X_3 X_4 X_5 X_6 X_7 X_8 X_9 U)$.

Where Y = Job satisfaction score of EWs

X₁ = Payment of allowances (0 if not regular, 1 if regular)

X₂ = Mobility (0 if not provided, 1 if provided)

X₃ = No of farm families covered by the EW (actual Number)

X₄ = Rate of promotion (0 if not consistent, 1 if consistent)

X₅ = No of trainings attended in the last 2 years (actual number)

X₆ = Age (Years)

X₇ = Gender (1 = Male, 0 = Female)

X₈ = Level of education (years)

X₉ = Years of experience (Yrs),

U = Well behaved error term

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results in Table 1 indicate that EWs rated the role of knowing the technology (mean = 4.06) and communication of the technology to the farmers (mean = 4.00) as very important. An extension worker should be a person with adequate knowledge of the technologies to be disseminated to the farmers (Ozor, 1996). With the adoption of the Unified Agricultural Extension System (UAES) by the Agricultural Development Programme (ADPs), the EWs assumed the responsibility of disseminating different technologies to farmers covering crops, livestock, fishery, agro-forestry and processing. Hence the need for them to possess adequate knowledge of the relevant technologies (Agu, 1998). Studying Village situation was rated as an important role by the respondents (mean = 3.98). It is imperative that functional extension workers must be very conversant with the geographical limit of their circle or cells (Ozor, 1996). Also rated important by the respondents (mean = 3.95) was the role of Feeding back the problems to the researchers. Agu (1998) in her findings confirmed that a feedback process was effective in extension research linkages. The respondents saw the role of organizing people as also important (mean = 3.88), which was in agreement with the current focus in extension delivery for the

purpose of multiplier effect. People need to be encouraged to carry out liberative activities to be free from exploitation (Akanji, 1998). The respondents also rated as important (mean = 3.80) the role of helping farmers to prepare farm plans. For proper planning and high return, it is imperative that, farmers should be adequately informed on farm plan preparation (Ajayi, 1999). The need to keep good records was perceived to be an important role (Mean = 3.77). According to Ozor (1996), one of the major duties of extension workers is to keep clear, accurate and up to date records. The respondents also perceived as important the role of facilitating programme implementation (mean = 3.69). Knowing source of inputs was rated as an important role (mean = 3.59). Extension workers are expected to know and direct farmers to sources of farm inputs. (Ajayi, 1999). The role of extension workers in linking farmers with financial and marketing institutions was rated as important (mean = 3.32). The Rural Institutions Development (RID) component of the ADPs has been noted as a veritable organ for facilitating linkages of cooperative groups to public and private input suppliers such as the banks, agro-chemical agencies, markets and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Akanji, 1998). The respondents rated the role of conflict management as important (mean = 3.13). In order to ensure casualty free environment, conflict should be managed at the emergence stage before it degenerate to escalation stage or beyond (Ajowun, 2006). The role of arranging supplies was also rated important (mean = 3.09). Although extension workers are not supposed to be involved in the distribution of farm inputs, experience from farmers who participated in the management training plots (MTPs) has demonstrated that, given access to production inputs (packages), adequate extension support and production incentives, farmers can easily increase their production by three to four times (Adeniyi, 2001). The grand mean role perception score was 3.68 implying that the EWs considered their overall role as extension workers to be important.

Job Satisfaction Ratings

The level of Job Satisfaction of the EWs is presented on Table 2. The level of fulfillment of the extension workers, involvement in special extension activities such as the Root and Tuber Expansion Programme (RTEP), Special Programme on Food Security (SPFS) and the Second National Fadama Development Project (NFDP II), length of stay in current station and government funding were found to be the major indicators of job satisfaction as all the means found to be equal to 5. The EWs were also satisfied with their performance as extension worker, working relations with colleagues, rate of promotion, working relationship with farmers, reward system, working relationship with superiors, salaries being paid on time and working conditions. The grand mean satisfaction score was 4.16 implying that EWs in the study area were satisfied with their job.

Table 1: Level of Role Perception of Rspondents

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking
Knowing the Technology	4.06	0.74	1
Communication of Technology	4.00	0.74	2
Studying Village Situation	3.98	0.68	3
Feed back the problems to the researchers	3.95	0.90	4
Organising people	3.88	0.74	5
Helping farmers to prepare farm plan	3.80	0.90	6
Keeping Records	3.77	0.77	7
Facilitating Programme Implementation	3.69	0.81	8
Knowing Source of Inputs	3.54	0.70	9
Linkages with financial/marketing Institutions	3.32	0.87	10
Conflict Management	3.13	1.10	11
Arranging Supplies	3.09	0.78	12
Maximum Score	44.21		
Grand Mean Score	3.68	0.34	

Determinants of Job Satisfaction Among Extension Workers

The results of the multiple regression analysis are presented on Table 3. The result shows that the coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) was 63.3%. This implies that the variables in the model were able to explain up to 63% of the variation in the level of Job Satisfaction among the extension workers of Nasarawa Agricultural Development Programme (NADP). The results also shows that regular payment of allowances, promotion, trainings and level of education were significantly related to job satisfaction. The above is consistent with apriori expectations since the regular payment of allowances leads to a greater degree of motivation and hence job satisfaction of extension workers. In the same vein the more extension workers attend training workshops, the more they are able to update themselves with current trends in the field of agriculture. Consequently, their level of satisfaction is expected to increase as a result of their ability to do their work better. The promotion of extension workers to higher ranks as at when due can go a along way to increase their level of confidence with the organization and hence their level of job satisfaction. Irregular promotion leads to frustration and reduced interest in the job. The level of job satisfaction is also directly related to the level of education of the extension workers, thus the higher the level of education, the higher the level of job satisfaction of the extension workers. Three variables namely; number of farm families covered, age and number of years of experience of the extension workers were found to be negatively related to the level of job satisfaction of extension workers. The above implies that an increase or rise in any of the variables will lead to a decrease in the level of job satisfaction of the extension workers. Reasons could

be due to ageing, fatigue and boredom with the same job over a long period of time. However, non of the variables was significant.

Table 2: Level of Job Satisfaction of the Extension Workers

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Fulfillment as an extension worker	5.00	0.65
Involvement in special project (SPFS, RTEP, NFDPII)	5.00	.055
Length of stay in current station	5.00	0.69
Government funding	5.00	0.58
Performance as extension worker	4.00	0.48
Working relations with colleagues	4.00	0.47
Rate of promotion	4.00	0.53
Working relationship with farmers	4.00	0.59
Reward system	4.00	0.56
Working relationship with superior	4.00	0.36
Salaries being paid	5.00	1.02
Environmental condition in the station	3.00	0.68
In-service training	4.00	1.04
Working condition	5.00	0.06
Involvement in decision making	4.00	0.39
Access to research findings	4.00	1.01
Extension facilities	3.00	1.17
Availability of local accommodation	3.00	1.19
Maximum Score	75	
Grand Mean Score	4.00	

Table 3: Result of the Multiple Regression Analysis

Explanatory Variables	Estimated Regression Coefficients	t-ratios
Constant	2.32(0.43)	5.39
Payment of allowances (X ₁)	0.39(0.11)	3.55 ***
Mobility (X ₂)	9.22(0.12)	76.83 ^{NS}
No. of farm families (X ₃)	-1.31(4.89)	0.27 ^{NS}
Promotion (X ₄)	7.59(0.15)	50.6**
Training (X ₅)	8.18(0.18)	45.44***
Age of extension workers (X ₆)	-9.48(0.08)	-118.50 ^{NS}
Gender (X ₇)	7.14(0.12)	59.51 ^{NS}
Level of education (X ₈)	2.98(0.51)	5.84*
Years of experience (X ₉)	-7.37(0.46)	-16.02 ^{NS}

Figures in bracket are standard errors. R² = 0.633 F-value = 6.392***
 *** - Significant at 1%, ** - Significant at 5%, * - Significant at 10% , NS - Not significant

Conclusion and Recommendation

It can be concluded from the study that a significant relationship exist between training of extension workers, regular promotion, payment of allowances and the level of job satisfaction among extension workers. Based on the findings of the study the followings are recommended; Firstly, the level of in-house and external trainings of extension workers should be maintained and/or improved upon so as to enhance their productivity and job satisfaction. Secondly, regular promotion and payment of allowances should be sustained through increased Government funding of the Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP). Lastly, a mechanism should be put in place to replace the ageing staff so as to improve the overall efficiency of the extension system.

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