

## PERFORMANCE OF THE EXTENSION SUB-UNIT OF THE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN DELTA SOUTH AGRICULTURAL ZONE, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The study examined the demographic characteristics related to the performance of the extension sub-unit of the Agricultural Development Programme in Delta South Agricultural Zone of Delta State, Nigeria. Results revealed that majority (73.855%) of the respondents were males, whom were married (63.08%). Also majority (81.54%) had post-secondary education qualification and indicated low level of remuneration (47.69%). The average age, household size, work experience and monthly income were 42.69 years, 5 persons, 12.5 years and ₦86,515.39 respectively. Though majority (65%) claimed not to be adequately encouraged in the job, they (60%) still feel satisfied with the job. Multiple regression revealed that variables like age ( $b = -0.176$ ), education ( $b = 1.523$ ), marital status ( $b = 0.083$ ), work experience ( $b = 0.572$ ), monthly income ( $b = 1.216$ ) and level of remuneration ( $b = 2.311$ ) were significantly related to respondents level of job satisfaction. Binomial test revealed that there was significant difference in proportion of extension agents that were satisfied and those that are not satisfied with their jobs. Based on the constraints limiting extension agents' job performance, the study call for policies aimed at provision of programme vehicles and motor cycles to the extension agents. This will help to encourage them to reach the farmers and disseminate agricultural technology in their rural communities. The conventional top-down approach to administration should be changed to down-top. This is necessary since it was an important challenge to extension service delivery. This is expected to enhance effective extension services delivery to farmers in the Zone.

**Keywords:** Remuneration, job satisfaction, work experience, level of encouragement, and extension agents

### Introduction

The Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) is a programme introduced into the country, Nigeria in 1972 and it was conceptualized to function effectively and efficiently, without which its goals cannot be realized (Agbamu, 2006). The programme is actually a World Bank programme. Since 1974 the World Bank has committed \$1.2 billion US Dollar for agricultural development projects to increase farm production and welfare among small holders in Nigeria. Conceptually, ADP was designed in response to a fall in agricultural productivity and hence a concern to sustain domestic food supplies as labour had moved out of agriculture into more remunerative activities that were more benefitting from the oil boom. The government's adoption of ADP concept put the smallholder sector at the centre of the agricultural development strategy and marked a clear shift away from capital-intensive investment projects to selected areas of high agricultural potential (ADP,

2016). Agbamu (2006) stated that each of the thirty six states of the country including Abuja has an agricultural development programme and that they all operate a unified agricultural extension system (UAES). Stressing further, the author noted that this extension system uses the contact-farmer approach as a way of trickling-down communication to reach the farmers being served by the state ADP.

Erie (2009) advanced that the primary role of the agricultural extension is that of transmitting improved agricultural technologies to farmers who are the end users of all findings emanating from agricultural related studies and taking their problems to appropriate research or government agencies for solution. The author summed that agricultural extension is an educational process designed for farmers to enable them adopt improved practices and by so doing raise their standard of living through their own efforts and using their own resources. In

continuing, Erie (2009) further stressed that extension is the vessel for delivering agricultural transformation planned to meet national goals and aspirations. Adereti and Ajayi (2005) acknowledged that for extension to succeed, it must operate within the principle of starting from where the people are, it must be based on the needs and interest of the people, assist farmers to determine their own problems and them to find desirable solutions and to take actions, there should be cooperative work amongst the people and work with all members of the family amongst others. Extension services are essentially communicative (Adebayo and Adedoyin, 2005). The authors emphasized that the ultimate aim of an extension system is to effectively and efficiently deliver information to end users in a comprehensible and utilizable manner.

Adebayo *et al.*, (2003) posited that extension services bear great potentials for improving the productivity of natural resources and promoting the right attitudes among natural resources. The authors also informed that the responsibility of providing extension services has been largely that of government which she does through some of her agencies like the Ministry of Agriculture, Research Institutions, Agricultural Development Programme, etc. However, in assessing ADPs performance Omotayo *et al.*, (2001) submitted that despite the sensitive role of extension services and ensuring food security, the findings of most studies revealed that the extension service did not make significant impact on the agricultural scene. On the contrary, Erie (2009) concluded that the ADP approach made some impact while the World Bank's participation lasted. Sadly, Erie (2009) stated that with the withdrawal of the World Bank's funding arrangement, the services started dwindling and has presently waned so much in Delta State, and it is feared that if urgent steps are not taken, the goal of transforming agriculture in the state might never be realized. It is against this background that this study was carried out to actually ascertain if the extension services are meeting up with the aims of establishing them or not.

### Methodology

The study was carried out in Delta South Agricultural Zone of Delta State. Delta South is made up of eight (8) Local Government Areas (LGAs). They are Bomadi, Burutu, Isoko North, Isoko South, Patani, Warri North, Warri South and Warri South East LGAs (NAEC, 2008). The report stressed that the major languages spoken in the zone are Ijaw, Isoko and Urhobo and their population size according to 2006 census figure is 1,293,282. The area is mainly coastal and riverine and these accounts for the people are predominantly into fishing activities. Though some of

them still grow crops like cassava, plantain, yam, etc and rear animals like goat and poultry. The area is also noted for to be the state's nerve centre in where oil production and economic activities are concerned (NAEC, 2008).

### Sampling Procedure

The population of the study is the extension agents who were drawn from Delta South agricultural zone of the State. Data used for the study were generated from primary and secondary sources. Data for the study were collected with the aid of constructed and structured instruments (questionnaire) which were administered to the respondents and retrieved from them by the researcher duly aided by some trained enumerators. The questionnaires were first subjected to validity and reliability tests. In the case of validity test, the face content approach was employed where experts in the field of agricultural extension screened the instruments to be sure they meet with expectations. On the other hand, the reliability was attained through the use of Crombach Alpha method. The method produced a value of 0.78, thus indicating that the instrument was reliable. Four (4) out of the eight (8) LGAs (namely; Bomadi, Burutu, Isoko North, Isoko South, Patani, Warri North, Warri South and Warri South West LGAs) (i.e. 50%) that made up Delta South agricultural zone were randomly selected for the study. They include Bomadi, Isoko North, Isoko South and Patani LGAs. From each of the LGAs, eighteen (18) extension agents were randomly selected and administered with the question instruments. This actually brought the number administered with the instrument to seventy-two (72) extension agents. Out of the retrieved instruments, sixty-five (90.33%) of them suitable for analysis was used for the study.

### Analytical Technique

Data were analyzed through the use of descriptive (percentage, mean and frequency count) and inferential statistics (Multiple regression and Binomial test). Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the socio-economic characteristics, level of encouragement given and level of job satisfaction of the respondents. Likert scale was used to determine constraints limiting extension agents from improving on their performance. The scale ranged from 'Strongly agree' (coded 4), 'Agree' (coded 3), 'Disagree' (coded 2) and 'Strongly disagree' (coded 1). The weighted mean score of  $\geq 2.50$  [obtained as  $(4+3+2+1) = 10/4 = 2.5$ ] were considered as limiting factors while those with values  $< 2.50$  were regarded as not limiting in the performance of the extension agents job performance. Inferential statistics (multiple regression) was used to analyze hypothesis one of the study. It presents a case of linear relationship between job satisfaction of the extension agents (dependent variable) and socio-

economic characteristics (independent variables) of the respondents. The implicit form of the equation is shown below as:

$$Y = a + b_i X_i + e$$

Where:

Y = dependent variable (job satisfaction of extension agents)

a = the coefficient of the constant term

$b_i$  = the coefficients of independent variables (socio-economic characteristics)

$X_i$  = Independent variables

e = error term

The explicit form of the equation is stated as:

$$Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + \dots + b_8 X_8 + e$$

The equation analysed the extension agents' socio-economic characteristics and their relationship with the respondents' level of job satisfaction. Four different regression models (namely; Linear, Cobb-Douglas, Exponential and Semi-log) were estimated and amongst which the Linear regression model was adopted as the lead equation model. The reason for this adoption was due to the number of significant variables, the *a priori* signs and high coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) (Iyoha and Ekanem, 2002). The variables are expressed thus:

Y = Level of job satisfaction of the respondents (1-4)

$X_1$  = Gender (male = 1; female = 0)

$X_2$  = Age (years)

$X_3$  = Educational status (years)

$X_4$  = Marital status (married=1, 0=otherwise)

$X_5$  = Household size (number of people living and feeding together)

$X_6$  = Work experience (years)

$X_7$  = Monthly income (₦)

$X_8$  = Level of remuneration (₦)

Binomial test was used to determine the level of job satisfaction of extension agents in the ADP. The Binomial Test is an exact test of the statistical significance of deviation from a theoretically expected distribution or observations into two categories (Wikipedia, 2015). In this analysis, the two-tailed binomial test was used to determine the significance of difference in proportion of respondents that were satisfied and those not satisfied with their job. The formula for binomial distribution is given as follows:

$$b(x;n,p) = {}_n C_x * p^x * (1-p)^{n-x}$$

Where b = binomial probability

x = total number of successes (satisfied or not satisfied)

p = probability of success on an individual trial

n = number of trials

## Results and Discussion

### Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents of the study

Table 1 shows the results of the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents of the study. It showed that extension sub-unit of the agricultural development programme (ADP) was dominated by males (73.85%), most (63.08%) of whom were married with post-secondary experience (81.54%). The average age of the respondents was 42.69 years with the majority (44.61%) between 44 – 49 years. The average household size was 5 persons with most (47.69%) having between 3 – 5 persons, thus implying that they have small household size. The work experience revealed that most (29.23%) of them had between 15 – 18 years work experience, the modal was 12.5 years and their average monthly income was ₦86,515.39 with most (33.85%) of them earned between ₦91,000 – ₦110,000. This thus implies that the respondents are senior extension agents in positions of level 12 and above (according to civil service pay grading). Respondents level of remuneration revealed that most (47.69%) of them had low level of remuneration. The implication is that the extension agents have not been adequately encouraged in their jobs and this may translate to poor performance in the discharge of their jobs.

The dominance of males in the extension sub-unit of the ADP may be attributed to the tedious nature of the job and the accompanying challenges which can mostly be accommodated by men. Similar result was obtained by Agumagu and Nwaogwugwu (2006). They found that male extension agents formed the bulk of the work force in their area of study. Most respondents were married and this possibly implies that they are responsible persons in the society. This finding agrees with results of similar study carried out in Ogun State by Adebayo *et al.*, (1999). The average age (42.69 years) of the respondents indicated that they are young and active persons. Findings of Okwuokenye and Okoedo-Okojie (2014) concurred with this result as they found almost same average age (44 years) amongst extension agents in similar study in Delta State. Results showed that Delta State ADP is staffed with agricultural extension agents with post-secondary education qualification. This may not be unconnected to the large number of Diploma and Degree holders in the labour market in Delta State. This finding is in line with results of Okwuokenye and Okoedo-Okojie (2014) who found that most extension agents in a similar study had post-secondary education qualification. The respondents also showed an average of 12.5 years of working experience. This implies that they have put in long years of service in the job.

Reports of Agumagu and Nwaogwugwu (2006) agreed with this finding as they revealed long years of working experience among extension agents in Rivers State ADP.

#### **Level of encouragement among the respondents**

The level of encouragement administered to the respondents (through provision of logistics, prompt payment of salaries and claims) was sought and it is shown in Table 2. According to the results, most (47.69%) of the respondents indicated that they were averagely encouraged, while few (16.92%) of them indicated that they were poorly encouraged. On the contrary, the others feel different as 29.23% and 6.15% of them respectively indicated that they were just encouraged and very encouraged by the government. In broader categorization, majority (about 65%) of the respondents were not encouraged as extension agents, while only about 35% feel different about their level of encouragement. Such level of encouragement as perceived by majority would result in poor performance of their jobs. This finding is in line with that of Okwuokenye and Ovharhe (2018) who asserted that extension agents' remuneration has not been encouraging hence their poor level of job performance.

#### **Level of job satisfaction among the respondents**

Table 3 revealed the respondents level of job satisfaction. The results revealed two broad categorization. They are satisfied and not satisfied categories. From results majority (50.77%) indicated that they were just satisfied, while few (9.23%) of them indicated that they were very satisfied. On the other hand, about 21.54% and 18.46% respectively indicated that they were averagely satisfied and not satisfied with their job. On broader categorization, about 60% of the respondents were satisfied while about 40% feel different (not satisfied) in the job. Their level of decision may not be unconnected to the fact that they are engaged in their field of study and the interest they have in the job.

#### **Constraints militating against respondent' job performance**

The constraints limiting respondents job performance is shown in Table 4. Serious constraints had means of 2.50 and above. Among the serious constraints, poor logistics for staff (mean = 3.48) was ranked as the highest serious constraint. This was followed by inadequate and unstable funding of the extension system (mean = 3.44, and ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>), lack of motivation via payment of salaries and allowances (mean = 3.41) (ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>) and understaffing (mean = 3.10) ranked 4<sup>th</sup>. Other serious constraints were top-down approach to administration (mean = 2.93), outbreak of pest and diseases (mean = 2.87) lack of

supply of improved farming inputs (mean = 2.86). They ranked 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> most serious constraints affecting the respondents in discharging their jobs effectively. Poor logistics, outbreak of pest and diseases, under staffing and top-down approach have been identified by reports of FAO (2018) as constraints to extension service delivery in Nigeria. In continuing, inadequate and unstable funding of the extension service system and lack of motivation were identified by Okwuokenye and Ovharhe (2018) as constraints plaguing extension agents' commitments to their jobs.

#### **Determinants of level of job satisfaction among the respondents**

Table 5 shows the regression estimates of the effect of some socio-economic variables on respondents' level of job satisfaction. Linear regression model was adopted as the lead equation and it revealed that six variables (age, education, marital status, work experience, monthly income and level of remuneration) out of the eight variables were significant to the level of job satisfaction of the extension agents. The significant variables however accounted for about 68.1% variation in the extension agents level of job satisfaction. The model was considered appropriate for the analysis because the F-ratio (12.75) was significant at the 5% level (critical F-value = 2.62). The age of the respondents ( $b = -0.176$ ;  $t = 4.239$ ) was negatively signed and significant at 5% level to job satisfaction level of the extension agents. The result implies that the younger extension agents are more satisfied with their jobs than the older ones. The result is in consonance with that of Okwuokenye and Ovharhe (2017). The authors acknowledged an inverse relationship between age of extension agents and their level of assistance to farmers. Level of assistance may have likely stemmed from their level of job satisfaction. The educational level of the respondents had a b-value of 1.523 and t-value of 5.002. It was significant at the 5% level and positively related to level of job satisfaction. The implication of the result is that the higher the extension agents educational level, the higher their level of job satisfaction. The result agreed with the assertion of Eze *et al.*, (2006) which stated that education enhances extension agents' capacity to appreciate their job and then encouraged to use modern farm technology which results to higher farm output and income. Marital status of the respondents ( $b = 0.083$ ;  $t = 1.873$ ) was positively related and significant at the 5% level to job satisfaction. By implication, the extension agents that are married are more satisfied with their jobs than the unmarried. Being married shows that they are responsible and have people to cater for. This responsibility makes them show more responsiveness and satisfaction in their job. Work experience ( $b =$

0.572;  $t = 2,401$ ) of the respondents had a positive relationship with level of job satisfaction and it was significant at the 5% level. The result implies that those with more work experience are likely to be more satisfied with their job. Results of Agumagu and Nwaogwugwu (2006) revealed a positive relationship between work experience and job satisfaction level. The monthly income of the respondents had a beta coefficient of 1.216 and  $t$  – value of 4.302. The result was positively related and significant at the 1% level to respondent's level of job satisfaction. This finding implies that the higher the respondent's monthly income, the higher their level of job satisfaction. Higher monthly income will naturally influence and motivate the extension agents to do their work more dedicatedly to the agency in particular and the farmers in general. Remuneration level received by the respondents had positive and significant relationship with the level of extension agents job satisfaction. The beta coefficient and  $t$  – value was 2.311 and 7.422 respectively. What this implies is that the more remunerated the workers are, the more their level of job satisfaction. The result conforms to the assertion of Okwuokenye and Ovharhe (2017). They noted that high remuneration would result to making the workers happy, proud and encouraged to do their job.

#### **Test of difference in extension agents' level of satisfaction with their job**

Binomial test was used to analyze hypothesis two which states that; there is no significant difference in proportion of extension agents that are satisfied and those that are not satisfied with their job (see Table 6). From the result, a larger proportion (74%) of the extension agents was noted to be satisfied with their jobs (extension service delivery) in agricultural development programme (ADP). Contrarily, the other fraction (26%) which represents a minority was found to be less satisfied with their job. For this reason, the alternative hypothesis was accepted while the null was rejected). Thus; there is significant difference in proportion of extension agents that are satisfied and those that are not satisfied with their job. The result therefore suggests that extension agents satisfaction with the job of extension service delivery is significantly high, and this is attributed to the fact that the majority (74%) of the respondents fell under this category. The result simply implies that the government of Delta State (within her limits) is meeting up with her responsibility in remunerating the extension agents serving under the agency (agricultural development programme). The situation will go a long way in encouraging the workers in carrying out their jobs in a more responsive manner and this will consequently lead to higher farm output and sustainable food security. The result conforms to

the assertion of Okwuokenye and Ovherhe (2017) who declared that higher level of remuneration to the extension agents from the government will get them more encouraged to do their jobs and thus increase the level of assistance given to the farmers and consequently lead to farmers' high output and income.

#### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that majority of the respondents were senior civil servants of the agricultural development programme (ADP) and that though majority of them indicated poor level of encouragement by the government, they still seemed to be satisfied with the job of extension service delivery. The results therefore call for policies aimed at provision of programme vehicles and motor cycles to the extension agents. This will help to encourage them to reach the farmers and disseminate agricultural technology in their rural communities. The conventional top-down approach to administration should be changed to down-top style. This is necessary since it was pin-pointed as a challenge to extension service delivery. Doing this will enable the farmers' problems/challenges to be brought to book and catered for. The respondents agreed that under-staffing was a challenge. To this end, the agency (ADP) need to be adequately staffed for the farmers to be well reached and the agricultural information properly disseminated. This will help to reduce the extension - farmer ratio in the state in particular and the country in general. In addressing the problem of poor remuneration to the extension agents, the agency needs to be timely and adequately funded by the government. Through this funding, the extension agents would be highly motivated through prompt payment of salaries and allowances. They also need to be provided with improved farming inputs so that their job can be much more easily carried out.

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Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents (n = 65)

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Gender	Male	48	73.85	
	Female	17	26.15	
Age	20 – 29	5	7.69	
	30 – 39	18	27.69	
	40 – 49	29	44.61	
	50 – 59	13	20.00	42.69
Education	Prl. Educ.	-	-	
	Sec. Educ.	12	18.46	
	Post Sec. Educ.	53	81.54	
Marital status	Single	6	9.23	
	Married	41	63.08	
	Divorced	10	15.39	
	Widow(er)	8	12.31	
Household size	0 – 3	12	18.46	
	3 – 5	31	47.69	
	6 – 8	11	16.92	
	9 – 11	7	10.77	
	12 – 14	4	6.15	5
Work experience (years))	0 – 2	4	6.15	
	3 – 6	6	9.23	
	7 – 10	12	18.46	
	11 – 14	16	24.61	
	15 – 18	19	29.23	12.5
Monthly income (₦'000)	< 50	4	6.15	
	51 – 70	12	18.46	
	71 – 90	18	27.69	
	91 – 110	22	33.85	
	110	9	13.85	₦86,515.39
Level of remuneration	Very High	-	-	
	Just High	4	6.15	
	Average	20	30.77	
	Low	31	47.69	
	Poor	10	15.39	

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 2: Level of encouragement administered to the respondents

Level of Encouragement	Categorization	Freq.	Percentage
Encouraged	Very Encouraged	4	6.15
	Just Encouraged	19	29.23
Not Encouraged	Averagely Encouraged	31	47.69
	Poorly Encouraged	11	16.92

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 3: Level of job satisfaction among the respondents

Level of Satisfaction	Categorization	Freq.	Percentage
Satisfied	Very Satisfied	6	9.23
	Just Satisfied	33	50.77
Not Satisfied	Averagely Satisfied	14	21.54
	Poorly Satisfied	12	18.46

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 4: Constraints limiting respondents job performance

<b>Constraint</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Dev.</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
- Poor logistics support to staff	3.48*	0.42	1 <sup>st</sup>
- Top – down approach to administration	2.93*	0.61	5 <sup>th</sup>
- Outbreak of pest and diseases	2.87*	0.66	6 <sup>th</sup>
- Lack of training	2.04	0.82	8 <sup>th</sup>
- Under staffing	3.10*	0.53	4 <sup>th</sup>
- Lack of motivation via payment of salaries and allowances	3.41*	0.55	3 <sup>rd</sup>
- Lack of supply of improved farming inputs	2.86*	0.74	7 <sup>th</sup>
- Inadequate and unstable funding	3.44*	0.49	2 <sup>nd</sup>
- Lack of farmers' participation in programme Development	1.91	0.81	9 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 5: Respondents socio-economic variables determining level of job satisfaction

<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>Beta Coefficient</b>	<b>t-values</b>	<b>Prob. Level</b>
Constant	67.641	10.872	0.000
Gender	0.118	0.203	0.109
Age	- 0.176*	4.239	0.017
Education	1.523*	5.002	0.081
Marital status	0.083*	1.873	0.008
Household size	0.429	0.616	0.712
Work experience	0.572*	2.401	0.011
Monthly income	1.216*	4.302	0.001
Level of remuneration	2.311*	7.422	0.000

F = 12.75 (< 0.050), Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.681

Significant at 5% level (Critical value =2.62)

Table 6: Difference in extension agents' level of satisfaction with their job (Binomial Test)

<b>Satisfaction status</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Proportions</b>
Satisfied	48	0.74
Less satisfied	17	0.26
Total	65	1.00

Field Survey, 2018