

ATTITUDINAL AND MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING JOB PERFORMANCE OF FEMALE EXTENSION AGENTS IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA

M.T. Ajayi¹, and T.O.A. Banmeke¹

Correspondence author: Dr. Michael Tunde Ajayi, Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension Services, University of Benin, P.M.B. 1154, Benin City, Nigeria, E-mail: akinwumi5253@yahoo.com

Key words: Attitude, motivation, female extension agents, job performance.

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the attitudinal and motivational factors influencing job performance of female extension agents in Edo State, Nigeria. A random sample of 35 female extension agents was selected for the study. Findings reveal that the majority of the respondents (57.1%) were in the age group of 31 – 40 years and 82.9% were married while 94.3% had diploma qualification. The most important motivational factors influencing job performance of female extension agents are the opportunity for promotion, growth and in-service training. The majority of the respondents (88.5%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with their job and had a favourable attitude towards their job. Factors that inhibit female extension agents from working in their profession as factors limiting their job performance include lack of incentives, irregular in-service training for staff, the attitude of their male counterparts towards them and the educational level of the female extension agents. Educational qualification and income of the respondents was found to have a significant relationship with respondents' attitude towards their job. It is suggested that scholarship programmes should be provided for women to study agriculture and appropriate incentives such as transportation, an attractive salary, possibilities of promotion and growth should be provided for female extension agents.

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM DEFINITION

The contribution of the rural areas to the development of many developing countries is very important as the majority of the people

¹ Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension Services, University of Benin, P.M.B. 1154, Benin City, Nigeria, E-mail: akinwumi5253@yahoo.com.

lives in the rural areas. Agricultural extension service is now seen to have its role in assisting the rural farmers to increase agricultural production, improvement of family living condition including changes in knowledge, skills and attitude and as well as putting farmers in good frame of mind to adopt proven innovations (Agbamu, 2005). While women grow half of the world's food, a 1989 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) survey reports that 95% of agricultural extension services worldwide are directed at men (Dunn, 1995). The 1993 FAO report indicates that 94% of agricultural extension agents worldwide are males. Several studies also report the problems with male extension services as only directed to men or focussing narrowly on the traditional roles, when delivering programmes to women (Eboh, 1993, FAO, 1993, Fleck, 1994 and Colverson, 1995).

The following are specific problem areas:

- i) An extension agent's ability to communicate effectively with beneficiaries is very important. According to Truitt (1998), beneficiaries of extension service prefer receiving this service from a person of the same sex. However, both male and female beneficiaries felt more comfortable with women extension agents as they were said to be responsible, friendly, and efficient at farming. The use of female extension agents therefore makes the dissemination of useful information get to the farmers whose desired changes in knowledge, skills and attitude very important for agricultural productivity.
- ii) The purpose of women participating more in extension services is to enable the identification of the technical and information needs of the rural women. Unfortunately, female extension agents required for these tasks are overstretched. Of the world's extension agents, 15% are women (Dunn, 1995) and female agricultural extension agents amount to only 6% in Africa (Truitt, 1998).
- iii) Several researchers have defined attitude. Freedman, Sears and Carlsmith (1981) indicated that attitude towards any given object, idea or person is an ending system with cognitive, effective and behavioural components. Gayne (1975) defined attitude as an acquired internal state that influence the choice of personal action

towards some class of things, persons and event. Tosi and Carroll (1974) however saw attitude as an individual feelings and beliefs about another person, objects, events and activities and can be positive or negative. This is why workers the attitude and morale of workers is a concern to policy makers in Nigeria (Akinnusi, 1981).

According to Ngadiukwu (1999), provision of condition necessary for job satisfaction is very imperative in rendering quality services to the organization and to the clientele. Uwakah (1981) also found that poor attitude to extension work by agents in Imo and Anambra States of Nigeria had negative impact on their job performance.

- iv) Many theories of workers motivation have been propounded. Herzberg (1959) identified two categories of factors relating to people's attitude to work called "the two factor theory." Herzberg found that the two factors are independent of each other and one is associated with satisfaction while the other is associated with dissatisfaction. According to Rezvanfar (2006) a satisfied workforce leads to higher productivity. On the other hand, Dalton (1982) stated that wages and work conditions are naturally important in ensuring a motivated work force but are not the most important determinant of job motivation. Asiabaka (1992) reported that job performance of women workers in agricultural activities is poor, not because of any other factor but because of their lack of knowledge and skills in agriculture. According to Truitt (1998), women frequently opt for research positions instead of extension because it enables them to work in agriculture without needing to travel extensively and being away from their families for low salaries.
- v) In actualising the government's aim of developing the agricultural sector through extension services, there is need to identify factors that limit or inhibit women from working as agricultural extension agents as well as factors limiting their job performance based on the vital roles played by them in educating rural communities.

The study therefore investigated the attitudinal and motivational factors that influence job performance of female extension agents. The specific objectives were to:

- Determine the socio-economic characteristics of the female extension agents in Edo state.
- Identify the level of satisfaction with their jobs
- Identify specific motivational factors affecting their job performance.
- Examine the attitude of respondents towards their job
- Determine the relationship between some socio-economic characteristics and the attitudes of female extension agents towards their job.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in 2004 in Edo State of Nigeria, which is one of the states in the South-south region of Nigeria. It is an agricultural state with annual rainfall of between 1500 and 3000mm. The target population was the female extension agents working for the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP). The ADP is the agency responsible for extension services in Nigeria. A simple random sample of 35 respondents was selected from a total accessible population of about 45 female extension agents in Edo State. A structured questionnaire divided into three parts was used to collect the data for the study. Part one comprised of questions related to the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The second part had questions that sought to identify the level of job satisfaction and motivation. The last part had questions that describe the attitude of female extension agents towards their job. The questionnaire was designed to include Likert-type four point-scale scale where: 4 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 2 = disagree and 1 = strongly disagree. The instrument was subjected to a reliability test, which gave a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.80.

The data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and standard deviation while correlation analysis was used to determine relationship between variables.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 shows the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age:		
Below 30 years	5	14.3
31 –40 years	20	57.1
41 and above	10	28.6
Marital Status:		
Married	29	82.9
Single	6	17.1
Education qualification:		
School certificate	0	0
Ordinary Diploma (OND/NCE)	33	94.3
Degree (B.Sc./HND)	2	5.7
Income level:		
Below N10000.00	6	17.1
N10000 –N20000	22	62.9
Above N20000	7	20.0
Job experience (years):		
Less than 5	1	2.9
5 -10	7	20.0
11 -15	18	51.4
Above 15	9	25.7

Source: Survey Data

\$1 = N130.00

The result indicated shows that the average age of the respondents was 37.3 years, while the majority of the respondents (57.1%) were in the age group of 31 – 40 years. A total of 83% of the respondents are married. Though, the importance of education for extension personnel was

emphasized by Asiabaka (1992), the result of this study shows that the majority of the respondents (94.3%) only had a diploma qualification with very few having a degree qualification (5.7%). This result is however consistent with Atala, et al (1993) where majority of extension agents possess diploma qualification in Northern States of Nigeria. The result also shows that more than half of the respondents had a job experience of between 11 to 15 years (51.4%) and an income of between N10000.00 and N20000.00 (US\$85 -\$170.00) monthly.

3.2 Level of job satisfaction of respondents and important motivational factors

Table 2 shows the level of job satisfaction of respondents.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of respondents according to level of satisfaction with their job

Level of satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage%
Very unsatisfied	1	2.9
Unsatisfied	3	8.6
Satisfied	21	60.0
Very satisfied	10	28.5
Total	35	100

Source: Field Survey

It was obvious from the result that majority of the respondents (88.5%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with their job.

Table 3 indicates the major motivational factors that resulted in the female extension agents being satisfied with their job.

The result shows that opportunity for promotion and growth is the most important motivational factor. This was closely followed by opportunity for in-service training and development. This result agrees with the views of Akinsorotan and Adah (1997) that with presence of motivation, extension agents are likely to be satisfied with their job. It is surprising that salary was the last rated motivational factor that made female extension agents to be satisfied with their job. However, this is in agreement with the view of Dalton (1982) that wages and work

conditions are naturally important in ensuring a motivated work force but are not the most important determinant of job motivation.

Table 3: Mean rank distribution of respondents according to the motivational factors that made them to be satisfied with their job

Motivation factors	Friedman mean rank	Ranking position
Opportunity for promotion and growth	5.83	1st
Opportunity for in-service training	4.97	2nd
Sense of achievement	3.14	3rd
Recognition of accomplishment	3.11	4th
Job responsibility	3.00	5th
Salary	2.64	6th

3.3 Attitude of respondents towards their job

Table 4 shows the attitude of respondents towards their job.

Table 4: Respondents' attitude towards their job

Attitudes	Mean	Standard deviation
Government should provide women extension agents extra incentives	3.9	0.32
Women extension agents require regular in-service training	3.8	0.34
Women should not be confined to home economics	3.7	0.35
More women owning farms will encourage more women becoming extension workers	3.5	0.81
Extension work should not be for men only	3.3	0.46
Government is not encouraging women extension agents	3.3	0.91
Men's attitude towards women discourage women extension agents	2.6	0.68
Women extension workers can live in villages where extension takes place	2.5	0.61
Women extension workers working with men is against religion	1.5	0.92
Women extension workers working with men is against our culture	1.3	0.63

The result shows that the respondents have a favourable attitude towards their job. Most of the variables in Table 4, apart from two, are greater than the over all average of 2.5. The respondents strongly agreed that government should provide extra incentives to women extension agents. Women extension agents require regular in-service training, they should not be confined to home economics and more women owning their farms will encourage more women to becoming extension workers. This result is not unexpected and is in agreement with that of Agumagu and Nwaogwugwu (2006) who found that various staff development of extension agents in Abia and Rivers States of Nigeria led to a high level of job commitment and performance.

3.4 Relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics of respondents and their attitude towards their job

In Table 5 below, a correlation analysis of some of the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents with the respondents' attitude towards their job is being presented.

Table 5: Relationship between selected Respondents' socio-economic characteristics and attitude towards their job

Selected socio-economic characteristics	Correlation coefficient (r)
Age	0.011
Education	0.517*
Marital status	0.201
Job experience	0.037
Income	0.72*

* = Significant at 0.05 level

The result in Table 5 shows that only educational qualification and income of the respondents had significant relationship with respondents' attitude towards their job. However, these results are expected and also in agreement with Rezvanfar (2006) that found a positive and significant relationship between extension agents' level of education and their job satisfaction. This is because attaining higher education and an increase in income would lead to a favourable attitude towards their job and therefore job satisfaction. Ekpere (1973), Saiguonkor and Patel (1970) in their studies have shown that age and

experience of extension agents have an influence in the performance of their work, while these results showed that respondents' age and job experience did not have any significant relationship with their attitude towards their job.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study has shown that female extension agents have a positive attitude towards their job as long as certain motivational aspects such as opportunity for promotion and growth; opportunity for in-service training and sense of achievement, are met. The study has also shown that factors that could inhibit females from working as agricultural extension agents, as well as factors limiting their job performance, include lack of incentives, irregular in-service training for staff, the attitude of their male counterparts towards them and the educational level of the women extension agents.

With the numerous economic and social benefits of employing female extension agents, it is important to encourage the female extension agents so as to have a positive attitude towards their job.

Based on the results of the study, it is therefore recommended that:

- There should be an increase in the number of females enrolled for agricultural training and they should be provided with scholarships.
- Regular adequate in-service training should be provided in order to up-date their technical knowledge.
- Appropriate incentives such as transportation, an attractive salary, promotion and growth should be provided for female extension agents.

REFERENCES

AGBAMU, J.U., 2005. *Problems and prospects of agricultural extension service in developing countries. Agricultural Extension in Nigeria.* Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria (AESON), Pg. 159 -169.

AGUMAGU, A.C. & NWAOGWUGWU, O.N., 2006. Extension Agents' Commitment to extension Work in Abia and Rivers States, Nigeria. *Global Approaches to Extension Practice*, 2(1):50–59.

AKINNUSI, M.D., 1981. *An examination of antecedent variables of effective worker performance*. Unpublished MBA Dissertation, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

AKINSOROTAN, A.O. & ADAH, O.C., 1997. Determinant of job satisfaction of agricultural extension agents in Kogi Agricultural Development Project, Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural Extension*, 28-32.

ASIABAKA, C.C., 1992. Assessment of the training needs and job performance of women agricultural extension personnel in Nigeria. *Journal of Extension Systems*, 8:158.

ATALA, T.K., VOH, J.P., ABUDULLAHI, Y.A. & SHEBAYAN, T.A., 1993. Professional competences needed by extension agents in three northern States of Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Rural Extension and Development*, 1(2):95–105.

COLVERSON, K.E., 1995. What do women want? Case Studies of Women's Needs for Agricultural Programming. *Convergence*, XXVIII (3).

DUNN, K., 1995. The busiest People in the World. *Ceres*, 27(4):48-52.

DALTON, G.E., 1982. *Managing agricultural system*. Applied Science Publishers, Essex, England. Pg. 142.

EBOH, E.C., 1993. *Women scientists and managers in agricultural research in the Philippines*. ISNAR Research Report 7. The Hague: International Service for National Agricultural Research. 113pp

EKPERE, J.A., 1973. *A comparative study of job performance under two approaches to agricultural extension in mid-Western State of Nigeria*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION, 1993. *Agricultural extension and farm women in the 1980s*. Rome, FAO

FLECK, S., 1994. *Extension "woman to woman"-training women liaisons to reach peasant women: A case study lessons learned through FAO Project in Honduras*. FAO, Rome.

FREEDMAN, J.L., SEARS, D.O. & CARLSMITH, J.M., 1981. *Social psychology*. Fourth Edition, Engelwood Cliffs, Prentice Hall Inc., New Jersey.

GAYNE, R.M., 1975. *Essentials of learning for instruction*. Holt Rhenheart and Wilson Inc. Pg 22.

HERZBERG, F.W., 1959. *The motivation to work*. John Willey, New York, pg. 416-417.

NGADIUKWU, E.O., 1999. *Staff motivation and job satisfaction, instrument for effective human resource development in extension*. Paper presented at the 5th annual national Conference of the Agricultural Society of Nigeria (AESON) IN University Of Nigeria, Usukka.

REZVANFAR, A., 2006. Job satisfaction amongst agricultural extension personnel in Kurdistan Province of Iran. *Journal of Extension Systems*, 22(1):23-35.

SAIGUONKOR, B.P. & PATEL, A.R.U., 1970. Relationship of certain factors with success of village level extension workers in Kaira District of Gujaral State. *Behavioural Sciences and Community Development*, 4(1):23-32.

TOSI, H.L. & CAROLL, S.J., 1974. *Organizational behaviour*. St. Clair Press, Illinois.

TRUITT, G.A., 1998. *Female agricultural extension agents in El Salvador and Honduras: Do they have an impact?* Training for Agriculture and Rural Development. FAO, Rome, Pg.64-83.

UWAKAH, C.T., 1981. Attitude to extension work: A survey of field staff in Imo and Anambra States of Nigeria. *The Nigerian Journal of Agricultural Extension* 1(1):4-14.