Analysis of job performance of agricultural extension Agents in Katsina state, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
The main objective of the study was to determine job performance of extension agents in Katsina State, Nigeria. Multistage sampling technique was used to select 108 out of 312 cells and 27 out of 39 blocks. Stratified and simple random sampling procedures were used to select 108 extension agents. Questionnaires were used to collect data for the study which was analyzed using correlation, performance self-assessment scale and descriptive statistics. The results revealed that 52.78% fall within average while 37.96% of the extension agents fall within the above-average job performance. Findings from correlation analysis revealed no significant relationship between job performance and age (r= -0.34) job performance and experience (r= -0.017), job performance and rank (r= -0.061) job performance and attitude to work of the extension agents (r= -0.153). However, the relationship between age and work experience was highly significant at 0.05 (r= 0.476) while the relationship between work experience and rank of the extension staff was significant at 0.05 level (r= 0.185). Finding of the study revealed four major problems facing extension service in the State: Namely Insufficient number of extension staff (96.30%), inadequate funding (96.30%), poor logistics supports (92.59%), lack of promotion (88.15%) and insufficient allowance to field staff. The study recommended that Government should employ more extension staff and motivate them.

Key words: Job performance, agriculture, extension agents, Katsina

INTRODUCTION
The growth of towns and the number of people involved in non-agricultural
activities have led to an increasing demand for agricultural products (Adams 1982). This has placed greater strain on soil and pasture resources which are being used up rapidly, especially in semi-arid areas and this made more difficult to provide a livelihood for a rural labor force which is expected to double by the end of the century (Adams, 1982). A more intensive and productive use of land can help to solve the problem. To achieve this, farmers should be given access to agricultural extension education as it is generally believed that one of the most important tools for increased agricultural development in Nigeria is the provision of efficient agricultural extension services to farmers (Arokoyo 2005). Thus, it becomes imperative for all agricultural extension agencies to recruit, hire or employs qualified and competent extension staff that could deliver agricultural information successfully to farmers.

This study is therefore aimed at studying job performance of extension agents in Katsina State to see whether they are up to the task or need to improve on their jobs as One of the biggest factor retarding progress and productivity in Nigeria is poor job performance and general indiscipline in relation to work

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Katsina state of Nigeria, located between latitudes 12.5139°N, and longitudes 7.6114°E (Adamu 2000) Katsina state had a population of 5,792,578. Out of this, about 51.42 percent were male while 48.58 percent were female. On the average, there are 242 persons living per square km in terms of the density of population (NPC, 2006).

Multistage sampling technique was employed to select 108 cells and 27 blocks from sampling frames of 312 cells and 39 blocks respectively from the three zones (Zonel Ajiwa, Zone II, Funtua and Zone III Dutsinma) of Katsina State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (KTARDA). A total sample size of 108 extension agents were selected from the sampling frame of 237 extension staff. The selection was carried out by use of stratified and random sampling method. In the stratified sampling, four (4) cells were selected per block while nine (9) blocks were selected in each of the three zones. One extension agent was then selected from each of the cells to obtain a total of one hundred and eight extension agents (1 extension agent x 4 cells x 9 blocks x 3 zones).

Data for the study were collected from primary sources. Structured and validated questionnaires were used to collect data from the extension agents (EAs). Data was collected on socio-economic characteristics: feelings or opinion on their performance in extension work as well as the problems facing agricultural
extension work in the state.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Spearman’s correlation analysis and performance rating scale. The descriptive statistics used include percentages, frequencies and means. Selected socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and the problems faced by the extension staff were achieved by the use of descriptive statistics. The relationship between some selected socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and their job performance and the relationship between job performance and attitude to work of the extension staff respectively were achieved using the correlation analysis. The job performance of extension staff was achieved using behaviourally anchored rating scale (self-assessment) and correlation analysis. In the self-assessment approach, respondents were requested to indicate their preferences to some questions on a five-attitude responses scale. They are strongly agree (SA) which is scored five points, agree (A) which is scored four, undecided (U) with a score of three, disagree (D) which is scored two points or strongly disagree (SD), with a score of one point. The scores for the performance self-assessment of the extension staff were summarized in Table 2. The maximum obtainable score were 20 with a mean of 16.87. Using forced distribution method, the respondents were grouped in to poor job performance (9-11 scores) below average job performance (12-14 scores), average (15-17 scores) and above average (18-20 scores) performance categories Table 2. This categorization was adopted from Luthans (1989).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economics characteristics of extension agents

Results of the study have shown that 68.96% of the extension agents were more than 40 years old. The results further shows that 62.96% of the extension agents were above 40 years (Table 1). This is similar to the finding of Haruna (2001), Oladosu and Okunade (2004) who also observed that majority of village extension workers in Kebbi State and Oyo Agricultural Zone of Oyo state were above 40 years.

Results of the study revealed that 94.44% of the extension agents were male. (Table 1), Haruna (2001) and Abdulmotaleb et al., (2008) also reported that most of extension agents (100% Kebbi State, Nigeria, 95.5% Yazd province, Iran) were male.

The results revealed that extension worker course certificate (EWC) or farm training centre certificate was the major qualification for 33.33% of the extension agents (Table 1) This finding is also similar with that of Abdullahi (1996)And
Haruna (2001) stated that 46.30% of the extension agents has more than 20 years of working experience. The implication of this finding is that the extension agents had acquired enough experience with which they can assist farmers but there is the need for Government to employ new hands in preparation for the retirement of the majority of its current serving staff (Table 1).

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristic of the extension agents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 40</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>62.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean =37.30 ,SD -4.649</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Sex
  - Male        102  94.44
  - Female     06   5.56
  - Total      108  100

- Qualifications
  - H.N.D/D.DEGREE 21  19.44
  - O.N.D/N,C.E   14  12.96
  - SECONDARY CERT 28  25.93
  - EWC/FTC       36  33.33
  - PRIMARY CERT   9  8.33

- Work experience
  - 1-5years       02  1.85
  - 6-10           17  15.74
  - 11-20          39  36.11
  - >20            50  46.30
  - Total          108 100

  Mean =16.67, SD = 4.520

Job performance and attitude to work of the extension agents
The results show that although (37.96% of the agents belong to the above average performance category, majority of the agents are within the average job performance category (Table2). This finding agree with the previous findings of Okpokpo (1995), Abdulmutalleb et al., (2008). The implication of this finding is that the State Government need to device ways of motivating the staff for better job performance.

### Table 2: Distribution of extension agents based on their scores for self-Assessmnt-performance (N=108)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Scores</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 – 11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 – 14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 17</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>52.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – 20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>16.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
<td>2.352</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Relationship between job performance, Attitude and Socio-economic characteristics of extension agents**

Table 3 shows correlation matrix between job performance and some selected socio-economic characteristics of the extension staff. The results revealed negative relationship between job performance and age (r= -0.34) job performance and experience(r= -0.017), job performance and rank (r=-0.061) job performance and attitude to work of the extension staff (r=-0.153). However, the relationship between age and work experience was positive (r=0.476) while the relationship between work experience and rank of the extension agents was positive (r=0.185) at 0.05 level. This finding is in agreement with the previous findings of Uwaka (1981) and Anthony (2003)
Table 3: Correlation matrix between Attitude and Job performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Job perf.</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Work Exp.</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job perf.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.34(\text{ns})</td>
<td>-0.017(\text{ns})</td>
<td>-0.061(\text{ns})</td>
<td>0.0153(\text{ns})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.476**</td>
<td>0.100(\text{ns})</td>
<td>0.102(\text{ns})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.048(\text{ns})</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.042(\text{ns})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey 2009.

Problems faced by extension staff in Katsina State

Problems faced by extension staff in the state as emphasized by the extension agents are depicted in Table 4. Majority of the extension agents (96.30%) claimed insufficient extension workers as one of the problems faced by extension service in the state. Again most of the extension agents (96.30%) agree with the statement that poor/insufficient funding is one of the problems facing extension service in the state. Similarly, majority of the extension agents (92.59%) were in agreement with the statements that poor logistics support such as lack of adequate means of transportation for staff, lateness in providing working materials for on-farm demonstration are serious problems to extension work in the state. Furthermore, 88.15% of the extension agents agree that lack of promotion of staff and non-payment of allowances to field staff are other problems facing extension work in the state. This finding is similar with previous finding of Agbamu, (2005)

Table 4: Distribution of Extension staff based on their assessment of problems facing extension service in the state (N=135)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Statement/item</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Insufficient number of extension workers that can provide service to huge population of farmers</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>96.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Inadequate funding is one of the problems facing extension service in the state</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>96.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Poor logistics support such as lack of adequate means of transportation to staff, lateness in providing working material for on-farm demonstrations also cause problems to extension</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>92.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
work in the state

Lack of regular promotion of staff and non-payment of allowances to field staff is another problem facing extension work in the state

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**Conclusion and Recommendations**

From the results of the study, it could be concluded that:

- 62.96% of the extension agents were more than 40 years old and 94.44% were male.
- Majority of the Extension Agents (33.33%) had Extension Worker Certificate (EWC). Similarly, 46.30% had more than 20 Years of work experience.
- There is no significant relationship between attitude to work and age, job performance, work experience and rank of the extension agents.
- Majority of the extension agents (52.78%) had average job performance.
- In sufficient number of extension staff, inadequate funding, lack of regular promotion and poor logistics support were the problems facing agricultural extension in the state.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations might help improve agricultural extension service in the State.

i. The extension staff should be involved in decision making and planning of extension programmes in their establishment. This can allow them present the problems they faced in discharging their duties and this might help in solving most of the problems.

ii. The state government should employ more extension staff. This might help in reducing the number of farmers to be covered by one extension agent and this can help improve the agent’s attitude to extension work as it will make their work easier.

iii. Extension staff in the state should be provided with good accommodation within or near their area of operation and means of transportation as this can facilitate their effectiveness.
iv. Extension staff should be given chance to go for in-service training, especially the agents who mostly have lower educational qualifications. This might help to improve their capacity for the success of agricultural extension activities in Katsina State.

REFERENCES


University, Sokoto.
