



Analysis of the Actual and Assigned Roles Performed by Extension Personnel of Imo State Agricultural Development Programme (ADP)

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Abstract This study comparatively analyzed the actual and assigned roles of extension personnel in Imo State Agricultural Development Programme (ADP). Data were collected with structured questionnaire and interview schedule from 100 farmers and 120 extension personnel randomly selected from the three agricultural zones in the state. Data were analyzed and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools such as frequency distribution table, percentages, mean score and chi-square was used to test if there is any significant difference between the actual and assigned roles of the respondents. The results among others showed that the assigned roles performed by the extension workers differ greatly from their actual role in the field. Most of the assigned roles performed by the extension personnel include; visitations to farmers, conducting trails and attending trainings (FNT & BM), while most of the actual role performed include; Tax collection, revenue generation, selling of materials, school runs, office work, farm hands and helping farmers have access to loan. Factors which influence these roles include; motivation, level of education of the staff, income level and the policy of the agency which had great influence on the assigned roles of the extension workers while greed, low income level and low motivation of the staff had great influence on their actual roles. The recommendations among others include the following: Policy should be developed by which the extension workers gain adequate incentive on the job, the agents should be given necessary transportation facilities and more in-service training for extension workers should be provided..

Keywords Analysis roles, actual and assigned roles performed, extension personnel, Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs), Imo State

Introduction

Agriculture before the advent of oil has remained the main stay of the Nigeria's economy. It is the source of food, fibre and raw materials needed for the nation's industrial development. Agriculture employs close to 70 – 80 percent of the Nigerian population and provides more than 30–42 percent of national gross domestic products in 2009, 30.9% in 2012 as well as 20.3% in 2013 as against 70 percent of GDP in the 1960s through crops like cocoa, groundnut rubber, cotton, and palm oil [1-2]. With the development of petroleum industry in the country, the contributions of agriculture to the national economy began to decline as attention shifts from agriculture to oil. Agriculture no doubt is the largest sector of the Nigerian economy. Records show that Nigeria has over 80 million hectares of arable land and this account for about 23 percent of arable land across all of west Africa [3]. The necessary key for successful reform is to turn agriculture into a business that makes money, with focus on investments as opposed to aid and development. No doubt the prospects for the agricultural sector is very bright. This is because of the growing demand for food driven by a large population and growing incomes as well as higher prices due to demand in the international market. According to [3], the federal government through the ministry of Agriculture announced a supportive program towards creating a Nigerian agricultural sector worth



\$256 billion by 2030. Government through this intends to stop food importation and ensure massive growth in the sector.

Currently, Nigeria is rolling out reforms across its agricultural sector aimed at cutting the country's dependency on food imports, creating jobs and generating growth.

The key to unlocking the growth potential of agriculture in Nigeria is to improve the lot of small scale farmers. Empowering the millions of small holder farmers who have access to millions of hectares will ensure they have access to appropriate inputs, sufficient financing that will significantly boost productivity. One of the best approach to solving the problems of agricultural development in Nigeria is through revigoration and proper revitalization of Extension Service.

The belief of Nigeria Extension Service is that increased agricultural productivity depends primarily upon the acceptance of improved, cultural and technological changes at the rural farm level and that farmers can achieve higher farm yields only if they adopt recommended scientific techniques in place of their traditional practice [4-6]. Extension agencies such as ADPs and ministries of agriculture are Nigerian Public Policy instruments usually located in the state bureaucracies to augment rural farmers productivity by promoting the adoption of new scientific farming practices through educational procedures. Scholars have expressed serious doubts as to whether extension services bureaucracies are capable of providing effective and efficient educational services for achieving mass adoption of improved farming innovations among rural farmers [4, 7]. In some aspects, there have been conflicting records in literature on success or otherwise of Extension service in achieving its aim of raising the standard of living of the rural people. While some evidence believed that Nigerian extension service has not been particularly satisfactory [7-8]. Others reveal that such programmes have been geared towards the large scale farm operators and men while neglecting, demoting and degrading the small-scale farmers and the more vulnerable groups like women [4, 9]. Some scholars also identified records of success of Extension service [10-11]. The effectiveness of Extension service will be judged by the number and proportion of different categories of farmers reached, the level of knowledge of the use of the improved technology, the effect of the Extension contact on the technology adoption and the level of agricultural productivity associated with extension contacts. It is quite discouraging that after many years of Extension work and the creation of facilitating organizations such as ADPs to boost agricultural production in the country, Nigerian farmers are still not producing enough to feed the growing population [2]. The question therefore is what actually is the cause? Is it extension or the policy makers? It is not uncommon to see extension service doing other duties outside pure extension work and this often impinge on their credibility. It is against this backdrop in knowledge that this study tends to address the assigned roles delegated to the extension workers and the actual roles they performed.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study include to:

- identify the assigned roles of extension staff in Imo State ADP,
- determine the actual roles of the Extension staff in Imo State ADP,
- ascertain the factors that informed the actual and assigned roles of Extension Staff in Imo State ADP and
- discuss the effects of these roles in the farming activities of farmers in the study area.

Hypothesis of the Study

A null hypothesis which stated that the assigned roles expected of the extension workers are not associated with the actual roles performed by the extension workers was tested.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Imo State. Imo state is one of the 5 states in South East Nigeria with a total land mass of about 25289.46km² [12]. The State has a population of about 2,485,499 [13]. The State is divided into 3 agricultural zones and each zone has ADP activities going on there. The people of the State are mainly civil servants, farmers and traders. All the farmers in the State and all Extension personnel constituted the population of the study but through representative estimation, 100 farmers and 120 extension personnel were



proportionately and randomly selected for the study. The sample frame is a list of Blocks, circles, Extension personnel and farmers as provided by the ADP offices at Owerri, Okigwe and Orlu zonal headquarters. Structured questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect the data for the study. Data were collected based on the Objectives of the study. The structured questionnaire was used to obtain information from the Extension personnel while interview schedule was used to obtain information from the farmers.

Data collected were analysed using basic statistical tools such as frequency distribution table, percentage, mean and mean score as they concerned the objectives of the study. The hypothesized relationship was established using Chi-square represented by the formula

$$x^2 = \sum \left(\frac{(f_0 - f_e)^2}{f_e} \right)$$

Where f_e = Expected frequency

f_0 = Observe frequency

Σ = Summation

Results and Discussion

The presentation and discussion of the results and findings were done under the following sub-headings;

- the assigned and actual roles of extension personnel in Imo State ADP
- factors that informed the actual and assigned roles of extension staff in Imo State ADP
- effects of the roles in the farming activities of farmers in the study area
- establishing the hypothesized relationship

Assigned and Actual Roles of Extension Workers

Assigned Role

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by Roles Assigned to Extension Workers

Roles assigned	Farmers		Extension workers	
	F*	%	F*	%
Visitations to farmers	20	40	70	58.33
Conducting trials	40	40	55	45.83
Attending FNT/BM	40	40	75	62.5
Distribution of inputs	50	50	15	12.5
Helping farmers access loans	50	50	15	12.5
Formation of co-operatives	20	20	25	20.83

*Multiple Response

Source: Field survey data, 2016

Actual Role

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by the actual role of the Extension workers

Actual Role	Farmers		Extension workers	
	F*	%	F*	%
Visitations to farmers	40	40	50	41.67
Conducting trials	35	35	50	41.67
Attending FNT/BM	35	35	60	50.00
Distribution & selling of inputs	45	40	70	58.33
Helping farmers access loans	25	25	20	16.67
Formation of co-operatives	25	25	30	25.00
Tax collection	15	15	17	14.17
School runs	25	25	17	14.17
Farm hands	40	40	40	33.33
Office work	25	25	25	20.83
Selling of materials	30	30	60	50.00
Revenue collection	30	30	48	40.00

*Multiple Response

Source: Field survey data, 2016



Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents according to assigned role of the extension workers. Majority of the famers were of the opinion that the assigned role performed by the extension workers include distribution of inputs (50%) and helping farmers have access to loan (50%). Also following are visiting the farmers (40%), conducting trials (40%) and attending trainings (BM x FNT 40%), very few famers believed that extension workers help in formation of cooperative societies (20%). Bulk of the extension workers believed that the assigned roles given to them include visitation of the farmers (58%), conducting trails (45.8%), attending training (FNT x BM) (62%) and helping in formation of cooperative societies (20.83%). Very few, just 12.5% see distribution of inputs and helping farmers access loan as their assigned duties.

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by the actual role extension workers play. Most farmers see revenue collection, distribution and selling of inputs and visitation to farmers as the actual role extension workers perform. While the extension worker believe that most of them are saddled with other activities outside the pure extension work such as revenue collection, selling of inputs and materials, farm hands etc in addition to visiting farmers, attending training meetings and conducting trials.

Table 3: Effects of Assigned Roles of Extension Staff on Farming Activities

Assigned role on farming activities	Very positive		Just positive		Not positive		Remark
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
	52	52	30	30	18	18	

Source: Field survey data, 2016

Table 3 shows the effects of assigned roles of the extension staff on the farming activities of the farmers. Farmers were asked to ranked the effects based on three point liker type measuring scale very positive, just positive and not positive. The remarks were ranked as follows very positive (3), just positive (2) and not positive (1). The result shows that the effects of the assigned roles appear to have just positive effect on the farming activities of the farmers (mean of 2.34). It therefore means that if the extension staff are allowed to perform the assigned role given to them at the point of their employment the roles are likely to show positive effect on the farming activities of the farmers.

Table 4: Effect of Actual Role of Extension Staff on Farming Activities

Effect of actual role of extension staff on farming activities	Very positive		Just positive		Not positive		Remark
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
	10	10	20	20	70	70	

Source: Field survey data, 2016

Table 5: The assigned and actual roles of the extension staff

Factors	Actual roles				Assigned roles											
	Very great		Just great		Low		Mean		Very great		Just great		Low		Mean	
	F	%	F	%	F	%			F	%	F	%	F	%		
Motivation	50	50	30	30	20	20	2.3		80	80	80	80	10	10	2.7	
Staff level of edn.	20	20	20	20	60	60	1.6		85	85	05	05	10	10	2.8	
Age of the staff	20	20	10	10	70	70	1.3		50	50	30	30	20	20	1.5	
Income level the staff	70	70	20	20	10	10	2.7		70	70	20	20	10	10	2.6	
Corruption/Greed on the part of staff	80	80	10	10	10	10	2.7		20	20	05	05	20	20	2.70	
Political Interest	10	10	10	10	80	80	1.3		10	10	10	10	80	80	1.30	
Ministry/ADP policy	18	18	38	38	44	44	1.74		30	30	50	50	20	20	2.70	
Peer group influence	75	75	15	15	10	10	2.15		10	10	20	20	70	70	1.40	
Staff attitude	40	40	40	40	20	20	2.2		50	50	20	20	30	30	2.20	
Misuse of the staff	80	80	10	10	10	10	2.70		20	20	20	20	10	10	1.6	

Source: Field survey data, 2016

Table 4 shows the effect of the actual role of the extension staff on farming activities. Farmers responses were measured on 3 point liker type scale of very positive (3), just positive (2) and not positive (1). The result shows a mean score of 1.40 thus showing that the actual roles the extension staff performs in the field hardly have any



effect on the farming activities of the farmers. This could most likely be because of the fact that these extension staff often get into roles outside their supposed assigned roles at employment. It is not uncommon seeing these extension staff being used for tax collection, revenue generation, selling of inputs and then school runs.

Table 5 shows the factors influencing the assigned and actual roles of the extension staff. List of factors likely to influence what the extension staff do either as assigned role or actual role and to what extent they influence the roles.

Farmers were asked to rank the factors influencing the assigned and actual roles of the staff of extension service based on factors listed using three point likertype scale measuring instrument.

The result shows that motivation, level of education of the staff, income level and the policy of the agency had very great influence on the assigned roles of the extension workers while greed, peer group influence, low income level and low motivation and misuse of the staff had great influence on the actual roles the staff perform in their agency.

Hypothesis

The assigned roles expected of the extension workers are not associated with actual roles performed by the extension workers.

Results show that a significant difference existed between the actual roles performed by the extension agents and their assigned roles ($\chi^2 = 4.66, P > 65$). The implication of this finding is that the farmers perceived the roles performed by the extension agents differently. This finding is also consistent with the appropriate expectation that there are differences in the actual and assigned roles by extension personnel as perceived by farmers.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, there exist a significant difference between the actual roles performed by the extension agents and their assigned role. The implications of this study is that the farmers, perceived the roles performed by the Extension agents differently, except in the case of the dissemination efforts of the extension agent.

Thus the Extension Agents skills have a lot of areas to improve on, at the same time they are not all together inefficient in their job. Some of their inefficiency can be attributed to the conditions and circumstances they are operating in.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. A policy should be developed by which the extension workers might gain adequate incentive on the job, and the ministries should give priority in their programmes to providing continuous in-services training. The important position of agent should be made attractive enough to draw dedicated people into the system.
- ii. The agents should be given necessary transportation facilities, and all essential teaching equipment: The very nature of extension requires that the staff be mobile. Proper means of transport must be provided.
- iii. It is recommended that an evaluation unit be set up within the organization of the ministry. Only through a scientific and systematic approach can the work of extension be adequately measured, and public confidence in it established and maintained.
- iv. The subject matter specialist who back up the extension agents, in the field should not be too narrowly specialized these men should be able to deal with the common problems which confront farmers on their farms, and which the extension agents would refer to them. These commodity specialists could also give the farmers field training which the agents are too burdened to have time for.



- v. More in-service training for extension workers. Extension workers should be made to undergo more in-service training programmes which is purely practical orientated to enable them guide the farmers.

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