

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF JOB PERFORMANCE OF FIELD EXTENSION WORKERS IN ABIA AND AKWA IBOM STATES, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed and compared the job performance of field extension workers in Abia and Akwa Ibom States. The study utilized both primary and secondary data with structured questionnaire as instruments for data collection. The sample size comprised of 172 respondents which included 112 EAs, 28 BEAs and 28 BESs drawn from Abia and Akwa Ibom States. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages and means. Result shows that in livestock management, the grand means for performance of EAs in Abia State ADP was 33.50 and their job performance level was 3.05; while the grand mean score for job performance of EAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP was 32.39 with a performance level of 2.94. The grand mean for the job performance of BEAs in Abia State ADP was 34.50 and their job performance level was 3.14 while the grand mean scores for the job performance of BEAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP was 34.00 and their job performance level was 3.09. The grand mean scores for the job performance of the BESs in Abia State ADP was 48.21 and their job performance level was 4.38 which indicates a high job performance on the other hand the grand mean scores for the job performance level was 4.33 which also indicates a high job performance. Therefore, the job performance level for the BESs in both Abia and Akwa Ibom States ADP were rated high. This study had shown that the job performance of agricultural extension workers in Abia and Akwa Ibom States differ slightly. It is recommended that in order to improve the performance of the agricultural extension workers, it should be taken into account the status of extension workers specifically on their competency skills and job commitment to work with the rural communities.

Keywords: Job Performance, Extension Agents, Abia and Akwa Ibom States, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) are currently responsible for carrying out the bulk of agricultural extension delivery in Nigeria. They are designed to improve the agricultural productivity, income, and general well being of small scale farmer, who is the centre –piece of all agricultural development efforts in Nigeria (Asiabaka, 1991; Madukwe and Obibuaku, 1991; Federal Government of Nigeria, 1997).

Agricultural Development Programmes have adopted the training and visit (T&V) system of extension though with modification over time. The T&V is also used and combined with unified agricultural extension system (UAES) where extension worker notwithstanding their area of specialization are trained for necessary skills in all the enterprises, such as Agronomy, Livestock, Fisheries and Agro-forestry (Issa, 2006, Oyewola, 1991).The staff of the ADPs were essentially drawn from the ministry of agriculture and are used to apply the principle of

concentration of efforts. They were improved upon as focal points for the improvement of the entire ministry staff, which took place under unified extension programme.

The success of ADPs depend on a large scale adoption of improved agricultural technologies by farmers and brilliant performance of frontline extension workers, that is, extension agents (EAs), block extension agents (BEAs) and block extension supervisors (BESs), saddled with this responsibility (Akinsorotan and Adah, 1997). The performance of BESs depends partly on effective supervision from the zonal extension officer (ZEO). Also, the performance of the EAs/BEAs depends partly on effective supervision from BESs. Poor performance of the ZEO can result in performance failure of BESs Okwoche and Asogwa (2012). Poor performance on the part of the BES will largely lead to poor performance of EAs/BEAs and ultimately contact farmer group/women groups (Ekumankama, 2000).

Performance requirements are a determination of the acceptable behavior directly related to the worker's performance on the job or operation. The general requirements of most jobs are stated in the form of job descriptions or job specifications, and procedures or work methods. The manager should translate the requirements of the job into meaningful and possibly measurable objectives so as to make performance requirements understood Okwoche and Asogwa (2012).

In the Nigerian agricultural extension organizations there is lack of proper and adequate understanding of the performance of extension personnel. There is also limited empirical research on job performance of extension workers in the area. There seem to exist dearth of information on the comparison between job performance of extension agents in Abia and Akwa Ibom States of Nigeria. It was against this background that this study was undertaken to compare job performance of extension workers in the selected states.

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of this study is to analyze and compare job performance of extension workers in Abia and Akwa Ibom States. The specific objective was to compare the job performance of field extension workers in Abia and Akwa Ibom States, Nigeria.

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the job performance of field Extension workers in Abia and Akwa Ibom States

Methodology

The research was carried out in Abia State of Nigeria which lies between longitudes $7^{\circ} 00'$ and $8^{\circ} 10'$ E and latitudes $4^{\circ} 45'$ and $6^{\circ} 17'$ N in Eastern part of Nigeria. The climate is typically hot and warm all year round. The mean annual rainfall is between 20,000mm to 25,000mm. Temperatures are constantly high with the annual daily maximum and minimum temperatures of around 31°C and 22°C respectively. Relative humidity is usually high and highest at the height of the rains and lowest during the harmattan months of December to February. High ranges of between 80% to 87% at 10am (Nigerian time) occur during the rainy season (ASADP, Report, 2000). The vegetation of the area is predominantly lowland rain forest. The major crops cultivated include yams, cassava, rice, maize, cocoyams, banana and vegetables. Abia has a population of 4, 222, 476 with three agricultural zones namely Aba, Ohafia and Umuahia (ASADP, Report, 2000). A purposive sampling method was used to select two agricultural zones from the three zones in Abia State and Akwa Ibom States. Secondly, a simple random selection was used to select seven blocks from the list of blocks

that make up each selected zone. Thirdly, four circles were randomly selected. A total of 172 respondents which included 112 EAs, 28 BEAs and 28 BESs drawn from Abia and Akwa Ibom States were randomly selected for the study. Both primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data was sourced directly from the extension workers through a well structured questionnaire. Secondary data were collected from related literature such as agricultural journals and books. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, means and percentages were used to analyze objective 1.

Model Specification

The variables were measured on a five point Likert-type scale rated as follows: very much (5 points) much (4 points) average (3 points) little (2 points) and very little (1 point). The extension workers gave answers on how much training they received on each of those practices.

The same variables for training needs were also used as variables or parameters for determining job performance. The variables were measured on a five point Likert-type scale: very high performance (5 points), high performance (4 points) average performance (3 points) low performance (2 points) and very low performance (1 point).

Decision rule for job performance

- 1.00-1.99 = very low performance
- 2.00-2.99 = low performance
- 3.00- 3.99 = average performance
- 4.00-4.99 = high performance
- 5.00 = very high performance

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data on the means of job performance variables for EAs in Abia and Akwa Ibom States ADPs are presented in Table 1. The grand means for performance of EAs in Abia State ADP was 33.50 and their job performance level was 3.05; while the grand mean score for job performance of EAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP was 32.39 with a performance level of 2.94. These findings implied that the EAs in Abia State ADP were rated with average job performance; while EAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP were rated with low job performance in livestock management.

Data on the means of job performance variables for BEAs in Abia and Akwa Ibom States ADP are presented in Table 1. The grand mean for the job performance of BEAs in Abia State ADP was 34.50 and their job performance level was 3.14 while the grand mean scores for the job performance of BEAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP was 34.00 and their job performance level was 3.09. The indication of these findings is that the job performance level of BEAs both in Abia State and Akwa Ibom State ADPs were rated with average job performance in livestock management.

The grand mean scores for the job performance of the BESs in Abia State ADP was 48.21 and their job performance level was 4.38 which indicates a high job performance on the other hand the grand mean scores for the job performance level was 4.33 which also indicates a high job performance. Therefore, the job performance level for the BESs in both Abia and Akwa Ibom States ADP were rated high.

Result in Table 2 shows that EAs in Abia State were rated highest on fish pond construction ($X= 4.25$). The grand mean for job performance of EAs in Abia State ADP was 18.64, while their job performance level was 3.11. These findings imply that the job performance of the EAs in fishery practices in Abia ADP was rated on average.

On the other hand the EAs in Akwa Ibom State were rated highest on site selection for pond ($X= 4.11$). The grand mean for job performance of EAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP was 16.75 while their job performance level was 2.79. These findings imply that the job performance of the EAs in fishery practices for Akwa Ibom State ADP was rated low. Comparatively, the job performance level of EAs in Abia State ADP ($X=3.11$) was higher than the job performance of EAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP ($X= 2.79$) in fishery practices.

Results in Table 2 show that the BEAs in Abia State were rated highest in site selection for pond ($X= 3.36$) and fish pond construction ($X= 3.36$) while the BEAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP were rated highest in fish pond construction ($X= 4.0$). The grand mean for job performance of BEAs in Abia State was 18.14 and their job performance level was 3.02. But, the grand mean for job performance of BEAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP was 19.86 and their job performance level was 3.31. These findings imply that the job performance of BEAs both in Abia and Akwa Ibom States ADPs were rated on average though that of Akwa Ibom was slightly higher than Abia State.

Further analysis in Table 2 indicate that the BESs in Abia State ADP were rated highest in Poly-culture management ($X= 4.79$) while the BESs in Akwa Ibom State ADP were rated highest in fish pond construction and Poly-culture management with same mean score ($X= 4.57$).

The job performance level of Abia State BESs was 4.12 against 4.37 of Akwa Ibom BESs. The implication of the findings is that the job performance of BESs both in Abia States and Akwa Ibom States ADPs were rated high but that of Akwa Ibom State BESs was rated slightly higher.

The result in Table 3 shows that the grand mean score for job performance of EAs in Abia State was 58.29 and the job performance level was 3.64 which means they were rated above average. The grand mean for job performance of EAs in Akwa Ibom State was 53.91 and the job performance level was 3.37 which indicate that the job performance of Akwa Ibom EAs was rated on average.

Also, the grand mean for the job performance of BEAs in Abia State was 64.43 and the job performance level was 3.90 (Table 3). This indicates that the job performance of BEAs in Abia State ADP was rated on average. The grand mean for the job performance of BEAs in Akwa Ibom State was 58.64 and the job performance level was 3.67. This result reveals also that the job performance of BEAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP was rated on average though that of Abia State was slightly higher.

The grand mean for the job performance of BESs in Abia State and Akwa Ibom State ADPs were 64.36 and 67.50 respectively. The job performance level were 4.02 and 4.22 for BESs Abia State and Akwa Ibom State ADPs respectively. Both results indicate a high level of job performance for the BESs in both States ADPs as shown in Table 3.

Data on the means of job performance variables for EAs in Abia State and Akwa Ibom State ADPs are presented in Table 4. The grand mean of the job performance of EAs in Abia State ADP was 19.18 and the job performance level was 3.96 which indicates that the job performance level of EAs in Abia State was rated on average. On the other hand the grand mean for the job performance of EAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP was rated on average $X=3.45$. Therefore the job performance of EAs for both Abia State and Akwa Ibom State in soil sciences were rated on average.

Data on the means of job performance variables for BEAs in Abia State and Akwa Ibom State ADPs are presented in Table 4. The grand mean for the job performance of BEAs in Abia State ADP was 18.07 and the job performance level was rated above average ($X=3.61$). In a similar vein the grand mean for the job performance of BEAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP was 18.21 and the job performance was 3.64. Therefore it could be implied that the BEAs of both Abia State and Akwa Ibom ADPs performed at the same level in soil sciences.

The grand mean for the job performance of BEAs in Abia State and Akwa Ibom State ADPs as shown in Table 4 were 18.71 and 17.14 respectively. The job performance level were 3.74 and 3.43 for Abia State and Akwa Ibom State BEAs respectively. It could be inferred from these finding that the job performance of BEAs in Abia State ($X=3.74$) and Akwa Ibom State ($X=3.43$) ADPs were rated on average.

The means of the performance variable for the EAs in Abia State and Akwa Ibom State ADPs are presented in Table 5. The grand mean for job performance of EAs in Abia State ADP was 30.23 while the job performance level was 3.02, which indicates an average job performance in Agro-forestry.

The grand mean for job performance of extension workers in Akwa Ibom State was 28.09 and the job performance level was 2.80 which indicate a low job performance in Agro-forestry. The findings show that the job performance of EAs in Abia State ADP was higher than the job performance of EAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP in Agroforestry.

The result in Table 5 shows that the grand mean for the job performance of BEAs in Abia State ADP was 30.85 and the job performance level was 3.06 which was an average job performance. While in Akwa Ibom State ADP the grand mean for the job performance of the BEAs was 29.71 and the level of job performance was 2.97. This indicates a low job performance. Therefore, it could be inferred that the job performance of BEAs in Abia State ADP was rated higher than the job performance of BEAs in Akwa Ibom ADP in Agro-forestry.

The job performance levels were 3.41 and 3.89 for BEAs in Abia State and Akwa Ibom State ADPs respectively. The findings reveal that the BEAs both in Abia State and Akwa Ibom State ADP were rated on average job performance in Agro-forestry practices.

Result in Table 6 shows that the grand mean for the job performance of EAs in Abia State ADP was 45.93 and the job performance level was 3.83 which indicates slightly above average performance. On the other hand the grand mean for the job performance of EAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP was 50.39 and the job performance level was 4.20 which indicate a high job performance. Therefore, it could be inferred that the job performance of EAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP was rated higher than the job performance of EAs in Abia State ADP in agronomic practices.

The grand mean for the job performance of BEAs in Abia State ADP was 45.14 and their job performance level of 3.76 was rated above average. The grand mean for the job performance of BEAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP was 49.43 and their job performance level of 4.21 was rated high. Therefore, the job performance of BEAs in Akwa Ibom State ADP was rated higher than the job performance of BEAs in Abia State ADP in Agronomic practices.

The grand mean for the job performance of BESs in Abia State ADP was 49.85 and the job performance level was 4.15 which reveal a high job performance. A similar result was obtained in Akwa Ibom State ADP where the grand mean for the job performance of BESs was 49.93 and the job performance level was 4.16. It could be inferred that the job performance of BESs in Abia State ADP and Akwa Ibom State ADPs were rated high.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study had shown that the job performance of agricultural extension workers in Abia and Akwa Ibom States differ slightly. It is recommended that in order to improve the performance of the agricultural extension workers, it should be taken into account the status of extension workers specifically on their competency skills and job commitment to work with the rural communities.

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Table 1: Job Performance of Extension Workers in Livestock Management

Variables	Abia State			Akwa Ibom State		
	EAs	BEAs	BESs	EAs	BEAs	BESs
	\bar{x}	\bar{x}	\bar{x}	\bar{x}	\bar{x}	\bar{x}
Construction of livestock pens	3.61	3.64	4.64	3.04	3.71	4.00
Selection of animal foundation stock	2.32	3.29	4.42	3.00	3.50	4.50
Diagnosis of sick animals	2.86	2.64	4.50	4.11	2.79	4.71
Drug selection and administration	3.57	2.93	3.89	3.75	2.79	3.71
Feed formulation for small ruminants	2.50	3.00	4.42	2.86	2.86	4.50
Feed formulation for poultry	2.84	3.14	4.36	3.00	2.71	4.14
Feed formulation for monogastrics	3.34	2.93	4.29	2.14	2.79	3.86
Identification of livestock diseases	2.50	3.07	3.86	2.48	3.21	4.57
Proffering solution to livestock diseases	3.36	3.14	4.50	3.04	3.29	4.57
Control of ecto parasites	3.21	3.43	4.64	2.30	3.14	4.42
Control of endo parasites	3.39	3.29	4.71	2.68	3.21	4.42
TotType equation here.al	33.50	34.50	48.21	32.39	34.00	47.64
Grand Mean	3.05	3.14	4.38	2.94	3.09	4.33

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Table 2: Job Performance in Fishery Practices for EAs, BEAs and BESs

Variables	EAs	BEAs	BESs	EAs	BEAs	BESs
	\bar{x}	\bar{x}	\bar{x}	\bar{x}	\bar{x}	\bar{x}
Site selection for pond	2.68	3.36	3.42	4.11	3.86	4.36
Fish pond construction	4.25	3.36	3.36	2.86	4.00	4.57
Fish feed formulation	3.75	2.71	4.71	1.96	2.64	4.14
Fish pond management	2.86	3.29	4.14	2.14	3.50	4.14
Maintenance of fishing gear	1.96	2.71	4.79	1.92	3.00	4.57
Poly-culture management	3.14	2.71	4.29	3.75	2.86	4.42
Total	18.64	18.14	24.71	16.75	19.86	26.21
Grand Mean	3.11	3.02	4.12	2.79	3.31	4.37

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Table 3: Job Performances in Extension Message Delivery for EAs, BEAs and BESs in Abia and Akwa Ibom States

Variables	EAs	BEAs	BESs	EAs	BEAs	BESs
	X	x	x	x	x	x
Method/result demonstration	3.91	3.71	4.21	3.21	3.50	4.42
Conduction of field days	4.04	3.57	4.07	3.61	3.48	4.57
Establishment of On Farm Applied Research Trials	4.25	4.21	4.36	3.04	2.93	4.36
Simple/Statistical Analysis	3.61	2.79	4.0	3.61	3.36	4.42
Ability to speak local/native language	3.73	3.57	4.0	3.05	3.48	4.29
Ability to speak English fluently	3.79	3.57	2.86	3.54	3.48	4.14
Reporting Farming/Field Problems	4.46	4.21	4.14	3.41	3.93	4.57
Formation/Organizing Farmers Group	3.21	4.14	4.21	3.39	3.86	4.86
Establishment of Small Plot Adoption Technique (SPAT)	3.75	4.21	4.07	3.64	3.93	4.0
Advisory visits to farmers	2.93	4.0	4.14	3.96	3.79	4.29
Identification of new farmers	2.86	3.64	3.57	3.0	4.0	4.42

Keeping of farm diary	3.04	4.21	3.43	3.04	3.93	3.29
Compilation of farmers registers	3.75	3.93	4.29	3.36	3.64	4.14
Coordination of farmers' meeting	3.79	4.21	4.42	3.43	3.79	4.57
Registration of farmers' group	3.57	4.36	4.57	3.93	3.64	4.14
Participation at FNT/BM	3.61	4.07	4.0	2.61	4.07	3.0
Grand Mean	58.29	64.43	64.36	53.91	58.64	67.50
Level of Job Performance	3.64	3.90	4.02	3.37	3.67	4.22

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Table 4: Job Performance in Soil Science for EAs, BEAs and BESs

	EAs	BEAs	BESs	EAs	BEAs	BESs
Variables	X	x	x	x	x	x
Erosion control measures	4.36	3.50	4.0	3.32	3.50	3.07
Fertilizer application methods	3.93	3.48	3.50	3.61	3.86	3.71
Soil conservation techniques	3.61	3.71	3.93	2.67	3.71	3.50
Soil water conservation techniques	3.46	3.71	3.79	3.32	3.71	3.29
Conservation of soil microorganisms	4.46	3.71	3.50	4.30	3.48	3.57
Grand Mean	19.82	18.07	18.71	17.23	18.21	17.14
Level of job Performance	3.96	3.61	3.74	3.45	3.64	3.43

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Table 5: Job Performance in Soil Science for EAs, BEAs and BESs

	EAs	BEAs	BESs	EAs	BEAs	BESs
Variables	X	x	x	x	x	X
Setting of beehive	3.25	3.29	3.14	2.68	2.71	4.14
Techniques in handling bees	2.75	3.14	4.29	2.61	2.79	3.42
Harvesting of honey	3.23	2.71	4.93	2.32	2.43	4.0
Establishment of snail farm	2.91	2.93	3.29	2.50	2.86	3.0
Selection of snail stock	2.96	3.07	3.86	2.29	2.93	4.14
Snail feed formulation	3.61	3.14	2.85	2.54	3.0	3.14
Harvesting of snails	2.59	3.57	3.43	3.75	3.21	4.57
Establishment of mushroom farm	2.71	2.79	4.43	3.59	3.71	4.42
Techniques Involved in planting Mushroom	3.21	3.14	4.0	2.89	3.07	3.42
Mushroom harvesting	3.0	3.07	4.14	2.93	3.0	4.57
Grand Mean	30.23	30.85	34.07	28.08	29.71	38.86
Level of Job Performance	3.02	3.06	3.41	2.80	2.97	3.89

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Table 6: Job Performance in Agronomic Practices for EAs, BEAs and BESs

	EAs	BEAs	BESs	EAs	BEAs	BESs
Variables	X	x	x	x	x	x
Site selection for crops	3.38	4.43	4.42	3.86	4.21	4.21
Land preparation for crops	3.45	4.36	4.42	4.02	4.14	3.57
Making/pegging of crops	4.36	4.29	3.71	4.34	3.93	4.0
Planting Techniques	3.71	4.0	3.21	4.20	4.07	4.07
Identification and Diagnosis of Crops Diseases	3.07	3.36	4.36	4.25	4.21	4.36
Proffering solution to crop diseases	4.26	3.21	3.86	4.34	4.14	4.36
Weed and pest control	3.61	3.71	3.86	4.04	4.0	4.42

Use and maintenance of knap sack sprayer	4.16	3.07	3.71	4.14	3.36	4.0
Identification of common pests	4.46	3.07	4.86	4.45	4.57	4.21
Proffering solutions to pests	3.54	3.50	3.71	4.05	4.29	4.29
Fertilizer application	4.46	4.0	3.71	4.29	4.21	4.14
Harvesting	3.46	4.14	4.71	4.43	4.29	4.29
Grand Mean	45.93	45.14	49.85	50.39	49.43	49.93
Level of Job Performance	3.83	3.76	4.15	4.20	4.21	4.16

Source: Field Survey, 2009.