

EVALUATION OF THE JOB PERFORMANCE OF EXTENSION PROFESSIONALS IN ABIA STATE OF NIGERIA

O.O Ekumankama¹ and A.C Anyanwu²

*Department of Rural Sociology and Extension, Michael Okpara University of
Agriculture, Umudike*

Department of Agricultural Extension, University of Nigeria Nsukka

ABSTRACT

The study was design to assess the job performance of extension professionals in Abia state agricultural development programme (ADP). The study also highlighted the relationship between selected personal characteristics and job performance variables of extension professionals in Abia state ADP. A sample of ninety six (96) randomly selected respondents provided information used for the study. Percentages, mean scores and Pearson correlation coefficient were the statistical tools employed in analyzing the data. The findings show that the job performance of each of the extension agents (EAs), block extension agents (BEAs) and block extension supervisors (BESs) was rated slightly above average. Level of formal education of EAs was significantly associated with job performance. The extension experience of BEAs and BESs was a strong predictor of job performance. The study recommends that policies should be designed to improve the level of formal education of EAs through greater participation of EAs in in-service training courses. Extension professionals who are more experienced in extension work should be retained and encouraged in their bid to ensure effective extension contact with farming groups.

INTRODUCTION

The agricultural development programmes (ADPs) which currently are the core institutions for extension services in the states have been carefully structured to facilitate the implementation of the training and visit (T&V) extension system. The structuring includes the delineation of the ADPs into zones, blocks, cells and sub-cells; identification of contact points and the use of contact farmers; fixed visit schedules for EAs and BESs and fixed work schedule for other staff among others. In spite of the structuring of the ADPs, high farmer/extension worker ratio, sub standard qualities of EAs and logistical problems such as lack of mobility are a few of the problems that have hindered the performance of extension workers and thus ADPs in some states (NAERLS, 1997; Obiechina, 1999).

Sustainable agricultural development depends largely on effective extension contact with farmers which therefore is pertinent in realizing the objectives of the extension agency. The management of the extension agency therefore cannot afford to ignore the job performance of extension professionals in ADPs. Extension professionals in this

study refer to ADP workers responsible for effective implementation of agricultural extension activities at the block level. They are the EAs, BEAs, and BESs.

Performance appraisal which is a legitimate activity in organization relates to the assessment of staff performance. There are various ways in which appraisal forms can be devised. However, the key elements are the focus of the appraisal, which is the job or the person, the performance criteria selected and the performance ratings used. Appraisal form which seeks information about the person rather than about his performance in the job does not provide a sound basis on which to take decisions about pay and promotion, for example. The way forward to reality for many organizations is to take the job duties and responsibilities as the focal point of appraisal. This approach emphasizes results achieved against standards set, and after taking circumstances into account [Cole, 1993].

The personal characteristics of extension professionals are important factors in ensuring higher job performance for these crops of workers and ultimately effective agricultural extension services. Personal characteristics include age, level of formal education, years of extension experience and so on. The question now relates to the job performance and personal characteristics of extension professionals at the block level in Abia state ADP. What is the level of job performance of each of the EAs, BEAs, and BESs? What is the relationship between the personal characteristics and job performance variables of extension professionals? These questions are relevant not only in fostering effective agricultural extension services but also in achieving sustainable agricultural development in general. To provide answers to these questions, this study was designed to: assess the job performance of extension professionals; determine the relationship between selected personal characteristics and job performance variables of extension professionals; and make appropriate recommendations based on the findings of study.

METHOD

The study was carried out in Abia state of Nigeria. The target population for this study was the extension professionals that included the BESs, BEAs, and EAs in Abia state ADP.

Multi-stage random sampling procedure was used in the selection of the agricultural zones, blocks, and circles. The first stage involved simple random selection of two agricultural zones in Abia state ADP. Aba and Umuahia zones were selected. The ZEOs whose zones were selected served as respondents. The second stage involved simple random sampling of seven blocks from each of the agricultural zones. The BESs

and BEAs whose blocks were selected served as respondents. The third stage involved simple random selection of five circles from each of the blocks. The EAs whose circles were selected served as respondents. This gave a total of 2 ZEOs, 14 BESs, 14 BEAs, and 70 EAs. On the whole, a total of one hundred (100) respondents made up the sample size for the study. However, there were ninety six (96) completed and usable questionnaires. Four EAs gave incomplete response.

Data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire schedule. Four sets of questionnaires were used to elicit information from EAs, BEAs, BESs and ZEOs. The data for this study were generated between 2003 and 2004.

To assess the job performance of the extension professionals, each of the selected extension professional was assessed by his/her immediate supervisor on a five point Likert-type scale of 1 to 5 as follows: 1= Very low, 2 = Low, 3 = Average, 4 = High, and 5 = Very high performance. The BESs were asked to indicate the extent to which each of the 16 different job performance statements or items represent the performance level of each of the EAs under them. Each of the selected BESs was also asked to indicate the extent to which each of the 14 different job performance statements or items represented the level of performance of each of the BEAs under their jurisdiction. The ZEOs were asked to indicate the extent to which each of the 14 different job performance statements or items represented the level of performance of each of the selected BESs working in their zone. The mean performance score for each of the different job performance statements or items for EAs, BEAs and BESs was calculated by dividing the total job performance score by the number of respondents, respectively. The job performance level for each group of the sampled extension professionals was computed by dividing the grand mean performance score by the number of the different job performance statements or items.

Percentages and mean scores were utilized for data analysis. The correlation statistic was used to test the relationship between selected personal characteristics and the job performance variables of the extension professionals. The level of probability that was accepted as indication of a statistically significant relationship for correlation analysis was at 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Information on the age, level of formal education, household size, and years of extension experience of each group of respondents was collected. The percentage scores of the selected personal characteristics are briefly summarized below, while the relationships between these characteristics and job performance variables of the groups

of respondents are tested in Tables 4, 5 and 6. Presented in Tables 1 to 3 are the job performances of EAs, BEAs and BESs, respectively.

Personal characteristics

Age

Fifty percent of the Zeros were in the age range from 40-49 years, while the remaining 50 percent were between 50 and 59 years. Majority of the BESs (71.3%) fell within the age bracket of 40-49 years. Majority of BEAs (64.2%) compared with 57.5 percent of the EAs were in the age range from 30-39 years. The survey shows that the ZEOs were generally older than the BESs, BEAs and EAs.

Level of Formal Education

All the ZEOs (100.0%) have higher national diploma (HND) certificate. Fifty percent of the BESs have HND certificate, 21.4 percent of them have first degrees, while another 21.4 percent have master's degree. Fourteen percent of the BEAs compared with 3.0 percent of the EAs have secondary school certificate. However, about 43 percent of the BEAs and 42 percent of the EAs have first degrees.

Household Size

Fifty percent of ZEOs had between 1 and 5 members in their households, while another 50.0 percent had between 6 and 10 household members. Majority of the BESs (64.2%), BEAs (78.6%) and EAs (60.5%) had between 1 and 5 members in their respective households.

Years of Extension Experience

The ZEOs acquired extension experience that ranged from 11 to 20 years with 50.0 percent of them having 11 to 15 years of service, while the remaining 50.0 percent had between 16 and 20 years experience in extension work. The BESs that had acquired between 1 and 5 years, 6 and 10 years and 11 and 15 years in extension work accounted for 35.5 percent, 35.6 percent and 28.5 percent, respectively. All the BEAs (100.0%) compared with majority of the EAs (77.3%) had from 1 to 5 years of service.

Job Performance of Extension Agents

Data in Table 1 indicate the means of the job performance indices for the EAs. The EAs were rated highest on regular and timely attendance to fortnightly training (FNT) and block meeting (BM) ($\bar{X} = 3.93$) by their immediate supervisors (BESs). This was followed by living within his/her circle ($\bar{X} = 3.77$), contributions during FNT (MT) and BM ($\bar{X} = 3.69$), knowledge of subject matter ($\bar{X} = 3.64$), establishment of SPATs within the farmer's farm ($\bar{X} = 3.61$), regular and timely field visits to farmers ($\bar{X} = 3.59$), and diagnosis and profering of solutions to field problems ($\bar{X} = 3.57$).

The grand mean for job performance of the EAs was 53.89, while their job performance level was 3.37 (see Table 1). These findings imply that the job performance of the EAs in Abia state ADP was rated slightly above average. This confirms Asiabaka's (1992) findings, which show that the job performance of women EAs as rated by their immediate supervisors (BESs) was slightly above average.

Table1: Job Performance of Extension Agents

Job Performance Statement	\bar{X} Performance Score
Living within his/her circle	3.77
Regular and timely field visits to farmers	3.59
Regular and timely attendance to FNT (MT) and BM	3.93
Contributions during FNT (MT) and BM	3.69
Diagnosis and proffering of solutions to field problems	3.57
Knowledge of subject matter	3.64
Establishment of eight SPATs in a month	3.27
Distribution of SPATs in all the sub-circles	3.34
Establishment of SPATs of three various components-crops, fisheries, livestock, agro forestry and land management in each sub-circle	3.46
Establishment of SPATs, within the farmer's farm	3.61
Having equivalent check plot for SPATs	3.31
Proper location of SPATs, examples, for crop not under shade and for livestock not in the open	3.34
Holding of a field day in a month	2.34
Making of report on field days	2.49
Motivating contact farmers/farmer groups to adopt different technologies in each sub-circle	3.37
Keeping of diary containing primary, self-recorded information on his/her village/field visits	3.17
Grand Mean (\bar{X}) Job Performance Score =	53.89
Job Performance level =	3.37

Job Performance of the Block Extension Agents

Data in Table 2 show the means of the job performance variables for the BEAs in Abia state ADP. The immediate supervisors of the BEAs rated them highest on regular and timely attendance to FNT (MT) and BM ($\bar{X} = 3.86$). Next to this was knowledge of subject matter ($\bar{X} = 3.57$). This was followed by teaching of processings to three women groups in a month ($\bar{X} = 3.50$), and regular and timely visits to contact women groups ($\bar{X} = 3.50$). The grand mean for job performance of BEAs was 44.78, while

their job performance level was 3.20. These findings imply that the job performance of BEAs was rated slightly above average.

Job Performance of Block Extension Supervisors

Tables 3 shows the means of the job performance indices for the BESs in Abia state ADP. Entries in the table reveal that the BESs were rated highest on the holding of block meetings (BMs) as scheduled (\bar{X} =4.21). Next to this was recording attendance during BM (\bar{X} = 3.93). This was followed by regular and timely supervisory visits to EAs/BEAs (\bar{X} = 3.), having agenda for BM (\bar{X} = 3.86), regular and timely attendance to FNT (MT) and BM (\bar{X} = 3.86), making of report at FNT

Table 2: Job Performance of Block Extension Agents

Job Performance Statement	\bar{X} Performance Score
Living within her block	3.14
Formation of eight functional contact women groups	3.21
Establishment of eight skill plots by her women groups	3.00
Carrying out eight processing demonstration in a month	3.00
Teaching of processings to three women groups in a month	3.50
Distributions of the processings e.g. Cassava based, cocoyam based, soybean based, yam based among others	3.21
Carrying out one preservation demonstration in a month	2.86
Holding of a field day in a month	2.43
Regular and timely visits to contact women groups	3.50
Regular and timely attendance to FNT (MT) and BM	3.86
Contributions during FNT (MT) and BM	3.43
Diagnosis and profering of solutions to field problems	3.00
Knowledge of subject matter	3.57
Keeping of diary containing primary, self-recorded information on her visits to women groups	3.07
Grand mean (\bar{X}) Job Performance Score =	44.78
Job Performance Level =	3.20

(MT) which reflects field situation (\bar{X} = 3.64), and reviewing of FNT (MT) production recommendations during BM (\bar{X} = 3.50). The grand mean for job performance of the BESs was 47.08, while their performance level was 3.36. These findings imply that the job performance of the BESs in Abia state ADP was rated slightly above average.

Table 3: Job Performance of Block Extension Supervisors

Job Performance Indices	\bar{X} Performance Score
Regular and timely supervisory visits to EAs/BEAs	3.86
Holding of block meetings (BMs) as scheduled	4.21
Having agenda for BM	3.86
Recording attendance during BM	3.93
Regular and timely attendance to FNT (MT) and BM	3.86
Making of report at FNT (MT) which reflects field situation	3.64
Reviewing of the FNT (MT) production recommendations during BM	3.50
Diagnosis and profering of solutions to field problems	3.21
Knowledge of subject matter	3.29
Signing of the EAs/BEAs diaries on making scheduled field visits	3.93
Covering circles without EAs according to his/her schedule	2.43
Establishment of one SPAT in a circle without EA in a month	2.14
Encouraging adoption of technologies by farmers/farmer groups	3.43
Keeping of diary recording the findings of his/her supervision visits and the issues on which he/she believes he/she should send feedback message to his/her superiors or to the agricultural research centers	2.79
Grand Mean (\bar{X}) Job Performance Score =	47.08
Job Performance Level =	3.36

Relationship between Selected Personal Characteristics and Job Performance Variables of Extension Professionals

Four personal characteristics, viz., age, level of formal education, household size, and years of extension experience were selected and their relationships with the job performance variables of the extension professionals were determined using Pearson correlation. Three hypotheses stated in the null form were tested and the result presented in Tables 4 to 6.

Relationship between Selected Personal Characteristics and Job Performance

Variables of Extension Agents

The first hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between selected personal characteristics and job performance variables of extension agents in Abia state ADP. Data in Table 4 indicate that level of formal education of EAs in Abia state ADP was positively and significantly correlated with regular and timely field visits to farmers ($r = 0.31$), regular and timely attendance to FNT (MT) and BM ($r = 0.35$), contributions during FNT (MT) and BM ($r = 0.34$), diagnosis and profering of solutions to field problems ($r = 0.26$), knowledge of subject matter ($r = 0.37$), establishment of eight SPATs in a month ($r = 0.26$), distribution of SPATs in all sub-circles ($r = 0.31$), establishment of SPATs within the farmer's farm ($r = 0.32$), having equivalent check plot for SPATs ($r = 0.29$), proper location of SPATs, examples, for crop not under shade and for livestock not in the open ($r = 0.31$), and keeping of diary containing primary, self-recorded information on his/her village/ field visits ($r = 0.26$), respectively.

The implication of the aforementioned finding is that the higher the level of formal education received by the EAs the more they made: regular and timely field visits to farmers, regular and timely attendance to FNT (MT) and BM, and contributions during FNT (MT) and BM, respectively. The finding also implies that the higher the level of formal education received by the EAs the more they diagnosed and profered solutions to field problems, knew the subject matter, established eight SPATs in a month, distributed SPATs within the farmer's farm, had equivalent check plot for SPATs, located SPATs properly, examples, for crop not under shade and for livestock not in the open, and kept dairy containing primary, self-recorded information on their village/ field visits, respectively. Thus, the higher the job performance of the EAs. Level of formal education of extension workers has been found to affect the performance on the job of individual field extension workers and extension service as a whole (Blum, 1991). Therefore, the more educated the EAs, the more the level of their job performance will be enhanced.

Entries in Table 4 show that age was not significantly correlated with the job performance variables. Household size and extension experience were each positively and not significantly correlated with all the job performance variables. These variables, namely, age, household size and extension experience were therefore not significantly associated with job performance of extension agents in Abia state ADP. The null hypothesis of no significant relationship between selected personal characteristics and job performance variables of EAs in Abia state ADP was accepted expecting the relationship between level of formal education received by the EAs and the aforementioned job performance variables. Therefore, the more EAs possess higher educational qualification, the higher their level of job performance.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Selected Personal Characteristics and Job Performance Variables of Extension Agents

Personal characteristic	Job Performance Variables														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Age	-0.05	-0.06	-0.07	0.02	-0.01	0.02	-0.06	-0.04	-0.13	0.15	0.16				
Level of formal education	0.24	0.31	0.35	0.34	0.26	0.37	0.26	0.31	0.19	-0.05	0.07	-0.06	-0.05	-0.11	-
Household size	0.08	0.10	0.10	0.13	0.12	0.11	0.06	0.04	0.11	0.32*	0.29*	0.31*	0.13	0.18	
Extension experience		0.10	0.16	0.19	0.09	0.02	0.11	0.06		0.07	0.05	0.08	0.09	0.10	
										0.08	0.07				
										0.10	0.13	0.02	0.15	0.09	
										0.08	0.09				

* Significant at P<0.05

Key:

- 1 = Living within his/her circle
- 2 = Regular and timely field visits to farmers
- 3 = Regular and timely attendance to FNT (MT) and BM
- 4 = Contributions during FNT (MT) and BM
- 5 = Diagnosis and profering of solutions to field problems
- 6 = Knowledge of subject matter
- 7 = Establishment of eight SPATs in a month
- 8 = Distribution of SPATs in all the sub-circles
- 9 = Establishment of SPATs of three various components-crops, fisheries, livestock, agro-forestry and land management
- 10 = Establishment of SPATs within the farmer's farm

- 11 = Having equivalent check plot for SPATs
- 12 = Proper location of SPATs, examples, for crop not under shade and for livestock not in the open
- 13 = Holding of a field day in a month
- 14 = Making of report on field days
- 15 Motivating contact farmers/farmer groups to adopt different technologies in each sub-circle
- 16 = Keeping of diary containing primary, self-recorded information on his/her village/field visits.

Relationship between Selected Personal Characteristics and Job Performance Variables of Block Extension Agents

The second hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between selected personal characteristics and job performance variables of block extension agents in Abia state ADP. Table 5 indicates that extension experience of BEAs was positively and significantly correlated with regular and timely visits to contact women groups ($r=0.58$), contributions during FNT (MT) and BM ($r=0.56$), and knowledge of subject matter ($r=0.57$) respectively. The implication of this finding is that the more experience the BEAs acquired on the job (extension work), the more they made regular and timely visits to contact women groups, contributed during FNT (MT) and BM, and knew the subject matter and thus, the higher their performance on the job. Age, level of formal education, and household size were not significantly correlated with job performance variables (Table 5). The finding implies that age, level of formal education, and household size were not significantly associated with job performance. The null hypothesis of no significant relationship between selected personal characteristics and job performance variables of BEAs in Abia state ADP was accepted excepting the relationship between extension experience and regular and timely visits to contact women group, contributions during FNT (MT) and BM, and knowledge of subject matter respectively.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Selected Personal Characteristics and Job Performance Variables of Block Extension Agents

Personal Characteristics	1	2	3	4	5	Job Performance Variables								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Significant at P<0.05														
Age	0.20	-0.01	0.14	0.28	0.15	0.09	0.16	0.04	0.06	0.01	0.08	-0.09	0.17	0.02
Level of formal education	0.14	0.03	-0.18	0.06	0.14	0.20	0.02	-0.02	0.19	-0.17	-0.14	-0.08	0.02	-0.21
Household size	-	-0.34	-0.34	-0.17	-0.12	-0.20	-0.22	-0.44	-0.45	-0.40	-0.33	-0.48	-0.25	-0.33
Extension experience	0.21	0.51	0.50	0.46	0.41	0.43	0.52	0.52	0.58*	0.49	0.56*	0.45	0.57*	0.41

Key:

- 1= Living within her block
- 2 = Formation of eight functional contact women groups
- 3 = Establishment of eight skill plots by her women groups
- 4 = Carrying out eight processing demonstration in a month
- 5 = Teaching of processings to three women groups in a month
- 6 = Distribution of the processings e.g. cassava based, cocoyam based, soybean based, yam based among others
- 7 = Carrying out one preservation demonstration in a month
- 8 = Holding a field day in a month
- 9 = Regular and timely visits to contact women groups
- 10 = Regular and timely attendance to FNT (MT) and BM
- 11 = Contributions during FNT (MT) and BM
- 12 = Diagnosis and profering of solutions to field problems
- 13 = Knowledge of subject matter
- 14 = Keeping of diary containing primary, self-recorded information on her visits to women groups

Relationship between Personal Characteristics and Job Performance Variables of Block Extension Supervisors

The third hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between selected personal characteristics and job performance variables of block extension supervisors in Abia state ADP. Table 6 reveals that household size of the BESs in Abia state ADP was negatively and significantly correlated with encouraging adoption of technologies by farmers/farmer groups ($r = -0.58$). The implication of this findings is that the larger the household size of the BESs, the less they encouraged adoption of technologies by farmers/farmer groups and thus, the lower their job performance.

Data in table 6 indicate that extension experience of the BESs in Abia state ADP was positively and significantly correlated with having agenda for BM ($r = 0.54$), regular and timely attendance to FNT (MT) and BM ($r = 0.58$), making of report at FNT (MT) which reflects field situation ($r = 0.54$), reviewing of the FNT (MT) production recommendations during BM ($r = 0.62$), diagnosis and profering of solutions to field problems ($r = 0.54$), signing of the EAs/BEAs diaries on making scheduled field visits ($r = 0.62$), covering circles without EAs according to his/her schedule ($r=0.56$), encouraging adoption of technologies by farmers/farmer groups ($r = 0.64$), and keeping of diary recording the findings of his/her supervision visits and the issues on what he/she believes he/she should send feedback messages to his/her superiors or to the agricultural research centers ($r = 0.65$) respectively. This findings implies that the more experience the BESs acquired in extension work, the more they had agenda for BM, attended FNT(MT) and BM regularly and on time, made report at FNT which reflected the field situation, reviewed the FNT

production recommendation during BM, diagnosed and profered solutions to field problems, signed EAs/BEAs diaries on making scheduled field visits, covered circles without EAs according to his/her schedule, encouraged adoption of technologies by farmers / farmer groups, and kept diary which recorded the findings of his / her supervision visits and issues on which he/she believed he/ she should send feedback messages to his/her superiors or to the agricultural research center. Thus, the higher the job performance of the BESs. The performance of EAs/BEAs who are saddled with the responsibility of ensuring large scale adoption of improved agricultural technologies by farmers/ farmer groups depend partly on effective supervision from the BES. Ineffectiveness on the part of the BESs will largely lead to low performance of EAs/BEAs and ultimately farmers / farmer groups (Akinsorotan and Adah, 1997; Ekumankama, 2000).

According to Table 6 the relationship between age and level of formal education and job performance variables of BESs was found to be not significant. Therefore, age and level of formal education of BESs were not significantly associated with job performance.

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Selected Personal Characteristics and Job Performance Variables of Block Extension Supervisors

Personal Characteristics	Job Performance Variables													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Age	-0.17	-0.27	-0.08	-0.01	0.03	-0.08	-0.22	0.16	-0.21	0.11	-0.12	-0.21	-0.22	0.02
level of formal education	-	-0.29	-0.04	-0.11	-0.05	0.05	0.08	-0.40	-0.44	-0.24	-0.07	-0.31	-0.06	-0.19
Household size	0.13	-0.28	-0.23	-0.22	-0.14	-0.09	-0.50	-0.18	-0.25	-0.12	-0.44	0.40	0.58	-0.44
Extension experience	-0.13	0.50	0.54	0.49	0.58	0.54	0.62	0.54	0.37	0.62	0.56	0.49	*	0.65*
	0.50		*		*	*	*	*		*	*		0.64	*

Significant at P<0.05

Key:

- 1= Regular and timely supervisory visits to EAs/BEAs
- 2= Holding of BMs as scheduled
- 3=Having agenda for BM
- 4= Recording attendance during BM
- 5=Regular and timely attendance to FNT (MT) and BM
- 6=Making of report at FNT (MT) which reflects field situation

- 7=Reviewing of the FNT (MT) production recommendation during BM
- 8=Diagnosis and profering of solution to field problems
- 9=Knowledge of subject matter
- 10=Signing of the EAs/BEAs diaries on making scheduled field visits
- 11=Covering circle without EAs according to his/her schedule
- 12= Establishment of one SPAT in a circle without EA in a month
- 13=Encouraging adoption of technologies by farmers / farmer groups
- 14=Keeping of diary recording the findings of his / her supervision visits and the issues on which he/ she believes he/she should send feedback messages to his / her superiors or to the agricultural research center.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has shown that the job performance of each of the sampled EAs, BEAs, and BESs in Abia state ADP was rated slightly above average.

Only level of formal education of EAs in Abia State was a strong predicator of job performance. It can be concluded that age, household size, and extension experience of these EAs in Abia state ADP are not important factors in ensuring higher job performance of these EAs. Extension experience of BEAs and BESs in Abia state ADP was a strong indicator of job performance. Household size of BESs was significantly associated with job performance

Policies should be designed to improve the level of formal education of EAs since this factor was found to show positive and significant relationship with some job performance variables in Abia state ADP. The implication is that well articulated in-service training courses should be mounted for EAs, both new and old, especially those that received lower level of formal education. Policy makers should therefore design policies that will ensure greater participation of EAs in in-service training courses. This will up date and up-grade the knowledge, attitude, and skills of these crop of extension workers thereby making them remain competent and confident.

There is need to ensure that the BEAs and BESs who had stayed longer as extension staff in extension service are retained and encouraged in their extension work. This situation requires that policies should be designed in such a way as to ensure that more experienced professionals will not leave the profession for other jobs.

REFERENCES

- Akinsorotan, A.O. and Adah, O.C (1997). Determinants of job Satisfaction of Agricultural Extension Agents in Kogi Agricultural Development Project. *Journal of Agricultural Extension*, Vol. 1, Pp.28-33
- Asiabaka, C.C. (1991). The role of Imo State Agricultural Development Project in boosting food production. *The Nigerian Journal of Agricultural Extension*. Vol. 6 (1&2), Pp.47-51
- Asiabaka, C.C. (1992). An assessment of the training needs and job performance of women agricultural extension personnel in Nigeria. *The Nigerian Journal of Agricultural Extension*, Vol. 7 (1&2), Pp.1-5
- Blum, A (1991). What can be learned from a Comparism of the Agricultural Knowledge system? The case of the Netherlands and Israel. *Agricultural Ecosystem and the Environments*, Vol.33, Pp. 325-339.
- Cole, G.A. (1993). Management: Theory and Practice, DP Publications Ltd., London.
- Ekumankama, O.O. (2000), Technology transfer strategy: A case study of Abia State extension services. *African Journal of Agricultural Teacher Education*. Vol. 9 (1&2), Pp1-5
- NAERLS (1997), Evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the training and visit extension system in Nigeria. Research report submitted to Agricultural Projects Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (APMEU), Federal Department of Agriculture, Abuja.
- Obiechina, C.O.B. (1999), Lessons from the Research- Extension- Farmers-Input- Linkage System (REFILS) of the agricultural development programme and implications for Nigeria's agricultural development. Keynote address presented at the fifth Annual National Conference of AESON, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Unamma, R.P.A., A.C Nwosu and E.Okoro (1999). Sustainability of the unified Agricultural extension system of the ADPs in Nigeria: what went wrong? In: T.A Olowu (Ed.), *Agricultural Extension Research and Development in Nigeria*. Proceedings of the fifth Annual National Conference of the Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria (AESON), Pp/66-75.