COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TRAINING NEEDS AND JOB PERFORMANCE CONSTRAINTS AMONG BLOCK EXTENSION SUPERVISORS IN ABIA AND AKWAIBOM STATES, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *Comparative analysis of the training needs and job performance constraints among block extension supervisors in Abia and Akwa Ibom states was studied. Primary and secondary data were collected with structured questionnaire from 28 BESs drawn from Abia and Akwa Ibom states. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means and t-test were employed in data analysis. Result shows that BESs in Abia and Akwa Ibom states had highest need for training in control of ecto-parasite (X= 3.93) and endo-parasite (X= 4.29) respectively. In fishery practices, Abia and Akwa Ibom states BESs had greatest need for training in fish pond construction (X = 3.71) and site selection for pond. In extension message delivery, Abia and Akwa Ibom states BESs had highest training needs in reporting farming/field problems, identification of new farmers (X=4.93) for each practice and coordination of farmers meeting (X=4.64) among others. In soil science, Abia and Akwa Ibom states BESs had highest training needs in fertilizer application methods (X= 4.93) and (X= 4.57). In Agroforestry, the BESs in Abia and Akwa Ibom states had highest need for training in establishment of snail farm (X= 4.21) and (X= 3.93). In agronomic practices, Abia and Akwa Ibom states BESs had highest need for training in site selection for crops land preparation, planting technique and fertilizer application (X= 4.79) and (X= 4.64). The major problems facing the BESs were poor input backup, lack of tangible facility for movement on the field, irregular supply of OFAR and SPAT inputs e.tc for Abia and Akwa Ibom states. Recruitment of more EAs and constant in-service training were recommended among others.*

KEYWORDS: Training needs, job performance, extension agents, constraints, Abia and Akwa Ibom States, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of Nigerian agriculture from subsistence to modern scientific system has been receiving attention from successive governments of the country. This has led to the implementation of various programmes aimed at increasing agricultural productivity and achieve towards food sufficiency for the citizenry. Some of these programmes as highlighted by Ijere (1992) and Olatunji (2005) include: the Farm Settlement scheme, the national accelerated food production programme, operation feed the nation, green revolution, the young farmers club and the school to land farming programme. Olatunji, Unamma and Nwachukwu (2014) explained that one common feature of these trials was that the results have been sadly unsatisfactory. The goal of food security was still far from being realized. Even the agricultural extension programmes that were put in place failed to bring about expected turn-around in farmers' productivity Olatunji, Onumadu and Ifeanyi-Obi (2015). Some the factors that

contributed to the failure of extension service in Nigeria were highlighted by Udo (1990) to include: inadequate training of extension agents and low morale arising from poor career prospects and frustrating work environments, large extension agent to farmers' ratio, bureaucratic set up, absence of single line of command and overload of extension staff with non-extension activities such as supervision of government ad-hoc projects.

Olatunji, Onumadu and Ifeanyi-Obi (2015) reported that the search for permanent panacea to the problems relating to technology generation, transfer and diffusion brought about the idea of Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) in 1975. The success story recorded in the first and second generations of ADPs led to the full implementation of ADPs in all the States of Nigeria Unamma, Uwaegbute, Edeoga and Nwosu (2004). The ADPs had employed the Training and Visit (T and V) system of managing the extension service. In spite of its notable benefits, the T and V system fell under severe criticisms not too long after its adoption in Nigeria.

Insufficient use of trained personnel has been identified as one of the reasons for the failure of ADPs in Nigeria. This has resulted to lots of criticisms being leveled against the job performance of extension workers. Owing to the functions of these extension workers, they need to be adequately trained to be able to render first grade quality service to the farmers. In this case, programmes are designed in such a way as to provide for wide and better use of the extension staff in terms of performance. If extension staff are not competent, extension programmes no matter how lofty, technically or economically viable cannot achieve more than partial success (Olayiwola, 2008). These desirable skills and competences are acquired through training. Competence refers to the ability of the extension staff to undertake extension duties effectively utilizing human capabilities acquired through training, experience and practice.

Akwa Ibom State Agricultural Development Programme has more agricultural zones, blocks, and cells as well as extension staff at the zonal level than Abia State Agricultural Development Programme (Okairimia and Nwogu, 2000, Okpongete, 2000). These differences may likely affect training needs and job performance of the extension workers in these two states. According to Issa (2008), the low performance of ADP staff in different states has always been reported but there is a great need to compare what each state ADP is doing with another so as to make recommendations for improvement. Moreso, it appears that many studies has not addressed the similarities or differences of the training needs and job performance constraints BESs in Abia and Akwa Ibom States. Based on this, the following research questions were formulated to quide the study. What are the training needs of extension workers in Abia and Akwa Ibom States? What are the job performance constraints limiting the performance of extension workers in Abia and Akwa Ibom States?

i.   Compare the training needs of field extension workers in Abia and Akwa Ibom states;

ii.   Compare the problems militating against the job performance of extension agents in Abia and Akwa Ibom states

Hypothesis

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference between the job performance of block extension supervisors in Abia and Akwa Ibom states

METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out in Abia State of Nigeria which lies between longitudes $7^0\ 00^1$ and $8^0 10^1$E and latitudes $4^0 45^1$ and $6^0\ 17^1$ N in Eastern part of Nigeria. The climate is typically hot and warm all year round. Relative humidity is usually high and highest at the height of the rains and lowest during the harmattarn 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. A purposive sampling method was used to select two agricultural zones from the three zones in Abia State. 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. Twenty eight (28) BESs were randomly selected for the study in both states. 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. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in data analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, means and percentages were used to analyze objective 1; while objective 2 was analyzed using four functional forms of multiple regression analysis. The null hypothesis was tested at 5% level of significance.

Model specification

Decision rule for training needs

The responses were summed to get the mean scores

1.00-2.99 = disagree they have need for training

3.00-5.00 = agree they have need for training.

The grand mean score was used in deciding whether there is training need or not for extension workers in each area of agriculture.

The models are specified

The formula is $z = \dfrac{X_1 - X_2}{S_{P1}^2/n_1 + S_{P1}^2/n_1}$

Where:

X_1 = mean for training needs variables for sample one (Abia State)

X_2 = mean for training needs variables for sample two (Akwa Ibom State)

n_1 = number of observations of training needs variables for Abia state

n_2 = number of observations of training needs variables for Akwa Ibom state

Sp = pooled variance for each of the samples (Abia and Akwa Ibom states).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result in table 1 shows that the BESs in Abia state agreed they had training needs in livestock management with a grand mean score of 3.44, also in AkwaIbom State they had greater training needs as shown in their grand mean score of 3.98. Abia State BESs had highest need for training in control of ecto-parasite (X=3.93) while AkwaIbom state had highest need for training in control of endoparasites (X= 4.29).

Result in table 2 shows that BESs in Abia state disagreed they had training needs in fishery practices as shown in grand mean of 2.95. On the other hand Akwa Ibom BESs had a great training need in fishery practices as shown in grand mean of 4.07. Akwa Ibom state BESs had highest need for training in site selection for pond and fish pond construction with the same mean level (X= 4.14).

Result in table 3 indicates that in Abia state and Akwa Ibom state the BESs agreed that they had more training needs in extension message delivery as shown in grand mean of 4.57 and 4.45 for Abia and Akwa Ibom States respectively. Abia state BESs had highest training needs in reporting farming/field problems and identification of new farmers (X=4.93) for each practice. In Akwa Ibom state the BESs had highest need for training in coordination of farmers meeting (X= 4.64).

The result in table 4 shows that BESs in Abia state had highest need for training in fertilizer application methods while Akwa Ibom State had great training needs in soil science as indicated by the grand mean of 4.37 and 4.41 for Abia and Akwa Ibom states respectively. Abia State BESs had highest training needs in fertilizer application method (X=4.93). Also in Akwa Ibom state the BESs had highest need in fertilizer application methods (X=4.57).

Result in table 5 shows that both in Abia and Akwa Ibom states the BESs had needs for training in Agro-forestry, the grand mean of 3.69 and 3.51 for Abia and Akwa Ibom states shows little difference in their needs. The BESs in Abia state had highest training needs in establishment of snail farm (X=4.21). Also, BESs in Akwa Ibom state had highest need for training in establishment of snail farm (X=3.93).

Table 6 shows a high training needs in agronomic practices for BESs in both Abia and Akwa Ibom States. The grand mean of 4.43 and 4.27 shows a little variation in their training needs. Abia State BESs had highest need for training in site selection for crops, land preparation, planting technique and fertilizer application (X=4.79) for each of the practices. In Akwa Ibom State the BESs had highest training needs in site selection for crops (X=4.64).

Table 7 shows that in Akwa Ibom state the following were perceived as major problems to BESs with 100% responses; Poor input backup, irregular supply of OFAR inputs, irregular supply of SPAT inputs, delivery of SPAT inputs, and lack of extension kits. In Abia state, poor input backup, lack of tangible facility for movement on the field were perceived as major constraints with 100% responses. Comparatively Akwa Ibom state BESs perceived more problems than BESs in Abia State as shown from the percentages.

Hypothesis Testing

If z-calculated is greater than (>) z-tabulated reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. The result of z-test in table 8 shows that z-calculated 2.407 and 6.388 for BEAs and BES were greater than z-tabulated (1.658). Therefore, the null hypothesis of no

significant difference between the training needs of field extension workers in Abia and Akwa Ibom States ADPs was rejected and the alternative hypothesis of a significant difference between the training needs of field extension workers (BEAs and BESs) in Abia and Akwa Ibom States was accepted. The implication of this result is that there is a variation in the training needs of Abia State ADP field extension workers (BEAs and BESs) when compared to their counterparts in Akwa Ibom State.

1. The result shows that relationship between the training needs of Abia state ADP field extension workers and job performance of Akwa Ibom state ADP field extension workers is statistically significant at p-value = 0.000 while the alpha value is 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the training needs and job performance of Abia state and Akwa Ibom state ADP field extension workers respectively is rejected.

2. The results shows that relationship between the training needs of Abia state ADP field extension workers and job performance of Akwa Ibom state ADP field extension workers is statistically significant at p-value = 0.039 while the alpha value is 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between the training needs and job performance of extension workers in Abia and Akwa Ibom states is rejected. Indeed the p-value gives the overall explanation of the model.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper had revealed that the training needs of block extension supervisors in Abia and Akwa Ibom states varied slightly. Further analysis also shows that these extension workers encounter similar problems in the discharge of their duties. Necessary inputs and kits should be provided for extension workers to enable them perform their scheduled duties appropriately. There is need to recruit more EAs and provide constant in-service trainings to them to enhance their job performance. The government should review salaries and allowances of EAs upward to motivate them for better performance.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: Training needs in livestock management for block extension supervisors

Variables	X	D	X	D
Construction of livestock pens	3.57	A	4.14	A
Selection of animal foundation stock	3.57	A	4.14	A
Diagnosis of sick animals	3.57	A	4.00	A
Drug selection and administration	3.29	A	3.64	A
Feed formulation for small ruminants	2.79	DA	3.93	A
Feed formulation for poultry	3.21	A	3.36	A
Feed formulation for monogastrics	3.14	A	3.79	A
Identification of livestock diseases	3.43	A	4.21	A
Proffering solution to livestock diseases	3.57	A	3.86	A
Control of ecto parasites	3.93	A	4.23	A
Control of endo parasites	3.71	A	4.29	A
Total	**37.79**		**43.79**	
Grand Mean	**3.44**	**A**	**3.98**	**A**

Table 2: Training needs in fishery practices for block extension supervisors

Variables	X	D	X	D
Site selection for pond	3.36	A	4.14	A
Fish pond construction	3.71	A	4.14	A
Fish feed formulation	2.57	A	4.00	A
Fish pond management	3.21	A	3.64	A
Maintenance of fishing gear	2.50	DA	3.93	A
Poly-culture management	2.36	DA	3.36	A
Total	**17.71**		**24.43**	
Grand Mean	**2.95**	**DA**	**4.07**	**A**

Table 3: Training needs in extension message delivery for block extension supervisors.

Variables	X	D	X	D
Method/Result demonstration	4. 29	A	4.29	A
Conduction of field days	4.57	A	4.29	A
Establishment of On Farm Applied Research Trials	4.23	A	3.93	A
Simple/Statistical analysis	3.93	A	4.36	A
Ability to speak local/native language	4.50	A	4.23	A
Ability to speak English fluently	4.57	A	4.57	A
Reporting farming/field problems	4.93	A	4.50	A
Formation/organizing farmers group	4.57	A	4.50	A
Establishment of Small Plot Adoption Technique	4.86	A	4.57	A
Advisory visits to farmers	4.79	A	4.57	A
Identification of new farmers	4.93	A	4.50	A
Keeping of farm diary	4.64	A	4.50	A
Compilation of farmers registers	4.29	A	4.50	A
Coordination of farmers meeting	4.23	A	4.64	A
Registration of farmers group	4.57	A	4.57	A
Participation at FNT	4.86	A	4.23	A
Total	**73.14**		**71.21**	
Grand Mean	**4.57**	**A**	**4.45**	**A**

Table 4: Training needs in soil science for block extension supervisors

Variables	X	D	X	D
Erosion control measures	3.93	A	4.14	A
Fertilizer application methods	4.93	A	4.57	A
Soil conservation techniques	4.57	A	4.23	A
Soil water conservation techniques	4.50	A	4.50	A
Conservation of soil micro-organisms	3.86	A	4.23	A
Total	**21.86**		**22.07**	
Grand Mean	**4.37**	**A**	**4.41**	**A**

Table 5: Training needs in agro-forestry for block extension supervisors

Variables	X	D	X	D
Setting of beehive	3.86	A	3.50	A
Techniques in handling bees	3.50	A	3.43	A
Harvesting of honey	3.64	A	3.50	A
Establishment of snail farm	4.21	A	3.93	A
Selection of snail stock	4.00	A	3.86	A
Snail feed formulation	3.00	A	3.50	A

Harvesting of snails	3.93	A	3.71	A
Establishment of mushroom farm	3.79	A	3.07	A
Techniques involved in Planting mushroom	3.64	A	3.21	A
Mushroom harvesting	3.36	A	3.29	A
Total	**36.93**		**35.07**	
Grand Mean	**3.69**	**A**	**3.51**	**A**

Table 6: Training needs in agronomic practices for block extension supervisors

Variables	X	D	X	D
Site selection for crops	4.79	A	4.64	A
Land preparation for crops	4.79	A	4.57	A
Making/pegging for crops	4.64	A	4.57	A
Planting techniques	4.79	A	4.57	A
Identification and diagnosis of crops diseases	3.79	DA	4.23	A
Proffering solution to crop diseases	3.79	A	3.57	A
Weed and Pests control measures	4.14	A	4.23	A
Use and Maintenance of Knap-Sack Sprayer	4.14	A	3.86	A
Identification of common crop pests	4.50	A	4.21	A
Proffering solution to crop diseases	4.36	A	4.36	A
Fertilizer Application	4.79	A	3.93	A
Harvesting	4.71	A	3.93	A
Total	**53.21**		**51.21**	
Grand Mean	**4.43**	**A**	**4.27**	**A**

Table 7: Percentage distribution of respondents according to challenges that militate against extension agents' job performance in Abia and Akwa Ibom states ADPs.

Variables	Abia State BEAs (%)	Akwa Ibom State BEAs (%)	Abia State BESs (%)	Akwa Ibom State BESs (%)
Inappropriateness of FNT curricular	28.6	50	14.3	42.9
High Farmers/VEA ratio	57.1	71.4	85.7	92.3
Poor input backup	100	100	100	100
Lack of tangible facility for movement on the field	100	92.3	100	85.7
Inadequate/irregular payment of mobility allowance	64.3	92.3	78.6	85.7
Inadequate practical during FNT/BM session	92.3	64.3	64.3	64.3
Incompetence on the part of the trainers	71.4	57.1	57.1	64.3
Irregular supply of SPAT inputs	92.9	100	92.3	100
Irregular supply of OFAR inputs	85.7	100	71.4	100

Irregular provision of refreshment during training	64.3	78.6	64.3	71.4
Lack of motivational welfare packages	85.7	100	57.1	92.3
Non conduciveness of training venues	78.6	85.7	64.3	78.3
Poor delivery of SPAT inputs	78.6	78.6	85.7	100
Poor delivery of OFAR inputs	93.3	85.7	50	92.3
Poor access to farmers	85.7	64.3	93.3	57.1
Non-cooperative attitude of extension agents	35.7	78.6	50	50
Inability to diagnose field problems	28.6	57.1	57.1	57.1
Lack of interest in extension work	42.9	64.3	50	57.1
Lack of extension kits	64.3	93.3	78.6	100
Poor communication network	64.3	78.6	64.3	71.4
Lack of extra curricula activity facilities	50	71.4	35.7	100
Strenuous nature of extension work	64.3	85.7	35.7	71.4
Lack of experience in extension	42.9	57.1	21.4	50

Table 8: T-test result showing the comparison between the training needs and job performance of field extension workers in Abia and Akwa Ibom States

Parameters	Training and Performance	Mean+S.D	t-value	p-value	a-value	Remarks
	Abia training need	3.98 0.08	2.261	0.064	0.05	Not significant
	Abia job performance	8.50 0.07				
	Akwa- Ibom training needs	3.89 0.04	9.738	0.000	0.05	significant
Livestock management	Akwa-Ibom job performance	8.26 0.06				
	Abia training needs	3.98 0.08	5.670	0.000	0.05	significant
Fishery practices	Akwa Ibom job performance	8.26 0.06				
Extension message delivery	Akwa Ibom training needs	3.89 0.04	2.570	0.039	0.05	significant
	Abia job performance	8.50 0.07				

Note: confidence level = 95%