



8/14/2017

FARMERS ATTITUDE TOWARDS INVOLVEMENT OF FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS IN PROVISION OF EXTENSION SERVICES [RESEARCH PROJECT]*

*Investigating A Different – Participatory - Approach to Improving
Extension Services Delivery*

Tayo K. Solagbade –
www.tayosolagbade.com |
tayo@tksola.com | +234-803-302-1263 or
+229-66-122-136

FARMERS ATTITUDE TOWARDS INVOLVEMENT OF FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS IN PROVISION OF EXTENSION SERVICES [RESEARCH PROJECT]*

Investigating A Different – Participatory - Approach to Improving Extension Services Delivery

**This PDF paper is based on a 1992 undergraduate final year research project study I carried out in fulfillment of the requirements for a B.Sc. in Agricultural Extension Services from University of Ibadan's Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry. I still recall those weeks I spent traveling to/from Lagos, to stay in my family house at Gbagada Estate, while I moved around Ayobo/environs in Agege Local Government Area.*

I put in great effort to prepare for and execute the project. Coming up with the topic was something my Project Supervisor (then Dr. Terry Olowu) did not let me fool around with. He drilled me extensively, and challenged me to do everything right from start till end.

I however believe what is most noteworthy today, is that reading through the paper, one readily sees that its contents remain relevant to development in Nigeria's agriculture sector even today!

The challenge of what has been described in some circles as a "near comatose: extension services delivery system, make the ideas proposed for adoption in this paper worthy of serious consideration by policy makers and stakeholders in Nigeria's agriculture industry.

This is why I've chosen to publish it via www.tinyurl.com/fo4extension as a downloadable FREE PDF paper, for interested persons to study.

NB; *It goes without saying that some concepts and bodies referred to in the paper are now obsolete. However, the overall strategy investigated remains undeniably relevant to our current situation!*

I'm willing to discuss with interested stakeholders about possible applications of this paper's findings ore even conducting an updated version that takes into account changes that may have taken place since this original study was done.

ABSTRACT

Inadequate provision of reliable and qualitative extension services to peasant and other farmers in Nigeria has remained a chronic problem (working against) the nation's agricultural development drive. Using a simple random sample of 70 farmers, this study dealt with the attitude of farmers towards their organization's involvement in the provision of extension services and the factors influencing such attitude. It was found that majority of the respondents were favorably disposed towards the idea of involving farmers' organization

Type of farmers' organization, the gender of the farmers and geographical location of the farmers are highly but negatively correlated with the farmers' attitude towards their organization's involvement in extension. The regression analysis showed that the type of farmers' organization ($\beta = -0.74$) is the single most important factor that determines the nature of attitudes towards farmers' organizations' involvement in extension among small scale farmers in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos State.

INTRODUCTION

Extension services in agriculture are mainly provided to farmers in Nigeria by government. This has been the case since the pre-independence era. Successive governments have, in trying to evolve a viable extension service in Nigeria, adopted diverse approaches some of which saw the initiation of programmes like Ministry Based Extension system of the MANR; Community Agency System; Farm Settlement Scheme (1963), River Basic Projects of the 1970s and the Green Revolution projects.

The Agricultural development Projects (ADPs) which have offices in every state of the federation represent the most recent attempts by the Federal Government to find a situationally relevant and appropriate extension services system. Extension Services, incidentally are also provided by some non-governmental organizations.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the proliferation of agricultural development establishments set up ostensibly to cater for farmers' needs, it remains obvious that peasant farmers still do not get enough farm management and advisory services necessary to enhance their abilities to achieve greater farming efficiency and subsequently improved productivity.

Reasons so far identified for the non-performance of the ADPs for instance are; inadequate extension personnel/manpower; poorly trained and lowly motivated extension workers (EWs); limited financial and material resources; bureaucratic bottlenecks which hinder effective performance of field workers; one-way channel of communication with clientele and conservative nature of farmers which manifests in a reluctance to accept technical advice or adopt innovations.

Since the enunciated problems translate to poor provision of extension services to farmers, it becomes pertinent to consider ways of solving them either by effecting another complete change in the extension system or better still considering a possible modification through the integration of a pre-existing but

complementary body to facilitate the adequate provision of the needed services. The ideal choice for this role would be an opportunity for more active involvement in deciding the nature of the provided extension services. These desirable features, among others, are possessed by farmers' organizations, hence their selection for use in this study.

CONCEPT OF FARMERS' ORGANISATIONS (FOs)

The way and manner in which a proposed change idea is presented to the target audience influences the nature of response given by the clientele. Due to the difficulties faces by government EWs in getting their services through to individual farmers adequately and effectively, it has been suggested that extension agencies and their workers, maintain regular consultation and contact with the leaders of farmers' organizations.

In this way, they can ensure that technological changes introduced match the farmers' needs, are acceptably presented and get to all the farmers concerned.

In Asia, the farmers' organizations extension system is common. This system is unique in that it is run solely by farmers themselves, who may hire extension workers to go about the provision of extension services. Examples of such countries are Japan, Korea, Taiwan and China. Farmers organizations equally abound in Nigeria, but not much effort has been so far directed at involving them in extensions services execution, if only to supplement the activities of the inadequately staffed and under-funded extension agencies already existing. Thus study therefore proposed basically to determine the attitude of farmers towards their organizations' involvement in extension work in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos State.

The specific objectives were to;

- a. Determine the farmers' demographic characteristics
- b. Investigate the farmers' perception of the existing extension agencies
- c. Ascertain the views of farmers regarding the possibility of involving their organizations in the provision of extension services.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The problem of a disproportionate number of extension workers available to farmers has constantly posed a great limitation to the transfer of technical information that is needed, to the farmers. This study investigated the possibility of adopting a different approach to the provision of extension services to termers by actually involving he farmer's organizations in this activity.

The findings will thus be useful to policy makers in the agricultural sector, since the viability of involving farmers' organizations in extension is examined and can therefore be used in future planning and decision making. The study also reveals farmers' impressions about the available extension service organizations'; (their weakness or otherwise), which can facilitate the restructuring of the extension organizations where necessary. All these will enhance the provision of efficient and effective extension services to farmers, culminating in enhanced acceptability of innovations and consequently improved farming efficiency.

METHODOLOGY

The study was relevant only to farmers who were members of FOs located in Agege L.G.A. Hence the population for this study comprised members of the different FOs that were selected. A simple random sample of 70 farmers based on the geographical delineation of Agege L.G.A. into five composite regions was studied between July and August 1992 (**25 years ago today**). A sampling frame of the different farmers' organizations was obtained from the area office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives at Oko-Oba, as well as Farmers' Cooperative Societies in the local government area.

A list of 26 organizations was altogether obtained of which 5 were either defunct or had incomplete contact addresses, leaving 21 organizations for use in sampling. In addition to the attitudinal dimension mainly focused on in this research study, various personal and socio-economic related data were collected in a field survey using a structured interview schedule. Factors which influenced attitude were calculated into pooled scores from items for each factor group.

Some of the null hypotheses were that there are no significant relationships between the attitude of farmers towards the organizations involvement in extension services and farmers' personal characteristics, farmers' awareness, farmer's geographical location as well as type of farmers; organizations. The data were analyzed using percentages, means, chi-square and multiple regression analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FARM SIZE; Based on the classification by Olayide et al (1980), all the farmers were summed up to be small scale (Table 4.71) (0.1 to 5.99ha)

RESPONDENTS' AGE; Most of the farmers were not less than 41 years old (Table 4.1). This finding is consistent with that obtained by Williams and Williams (1983) that the mean age of male farmers in their study was 45 years and that of females was 40.

LEVEL OF FORMAL EDUCATION ATTAINED; The data obtained revealed that 19% of the farmers (Table 4.6 items 2 & 3) were not fully literate and 61% (items 4 & 5) had average level of schooling. Only 9% of the respondents did not have any formal education.

RELATIONSHIPS OF VARIABLES; The chi-square (χ^2) statistic was used in testing the stated hypotheses.

Findings from the study showed there is no significant relationships between the farmers' attitude and (a) farmers' age (b) farmers' educational level (c) farmers' awareness of extension organizations.

A significant relationship was however found between the farmers attitude and (a) farmer's gender ($\chi^2 = 7.96, p < .05$, Table 4.20); (b) farmers' geographical location ($\chi^2 = 32.69, p < .05$, Table 4.22) and (c) type of farmers' organizations ($\chi^2 = 4.72, p < .05$ Table 4.24).

ATTITUDE

Fifteen items (statements) in the research instrument were designed to elicit responses from the respondents on their attitude towards the involvement of farmers' organization in extension. The farmers (respondents) were asked to respond by agreeing or disagreeing with the statements (Table 4.18)

The items were scored as follows; 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree. An average score of less than 3 indicates disagreement; a score of 3 means neutral while an average score above 3 means agreement. Findings show that the farmers agreed with the statement that farmers' organizations should do extension work. ($x = 3.0$). They also agreed with the statement that the organization's involvement will ensure better representation of farmers; interest to the government ($x = 3.9$).

They however disagreed that their organizations' involvement in extension work could cause unhealthy competition amongst farmers in a bid to gain better access to services provide ($x = 2.1$). Respondents were undecided as to whether the lack of cooperative spirit amongst their leaders was responsible for their organizations not being involved in extension ($x = 3.0$).

A section of the data collection instrument asked respondents where they would go for help if they had farming problems. Findings indicated that 38.6% of the farmers often consult extension agencies/agents, while a good majority (44.3%) go to the farmers' organizations or fellow farmers. None indicated a preference for the mass media as a source of useful farm related information.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

A multiple regression analysis was carried out to explain the variability in the study's dependent variable using some of the study's independent variables. The results showed that 5 variables (type of organization, gender, geographical location, size and educational level) accounted for 35% of the explained variance of farmers' attitude.

Results obtained from the partial regression analysis revealed that a major factor influencing the attitude of farmers towards their organizations' involvement in extension is the type of farmers' organization (x_7) $\beta = -0.74$. There were significant differences in the influence of the selected independent variables on the attitude of the farmers. The type of farmers' organization (x_7), the gender of the farmers' (x_{47}) $\beta = -0.50$ and their geographical location (x_{62}) $\beta = -0.20$ are highly and negatively correlated with the farmers' attitude.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Efforts so far directed at solving the problems hindering the effective performance of extension agencies have not been fruitful. As such a need to find other ways of providing extension services to farmers has become apparent. The erratic trend in the visiting pattern of extension agents to the farmers (revealed in the study's findings) could have been responsible for the expression of positive dispositions by the farmers towards the idea of involving their organizations in extension.

From the above, it becomes imperative for the government to seriously consider the possibility of introducing farmers' organizations into the extension service network already existing, since the parties concerned (farmers) themselves have shown an interest in such a proposition.

Conclusions drawn from the study are that:

- a. Farmers are generally favorably disposed towards the idea of involving farmers organizations in extension.
- b. Farmers do not believe they should completely take over provision of extension services – instead they feel there are certain areas of extension in which their organizations can assist existing extension agencies serve farmers better.
- c. Farmers usually prefer to consult farmers' organizations when they are in need of solutions to farming problems. This underscored the potential of these organizations for getting ideas across to farmers with less difficulty.

The study revealed that farmers have a positive attitude towards their organization's involvement in extension so long as the different types of farmers' organizations existing are as few as possible (i.e. the fewer the number of different organizational types, the more favorable farmers' attitude will be). It is therefore recommended that the formation of multipurpose types of organizations be encouraged among farmers where there are none, and strengthened where they exist, since this type was the most common (80%) amongst farmers used in the study.

Other recommendations are that further research be done to identify problems likely to be encountered in the process of involving FOs in extension, and solutions found to them. The extent to which farmers feel they should be involved in extension as well as the particular areas they feel their involvement will make a difference also need to be ascertained.

For these to be achieved, farmers must be given the opportunity to air their views on how they feel their organizations may be useful in helping to solve problems unique to themselves and which they are therefore better able to understand. This opportunity will most easily be afforded them by the government giving the recognition to the farmer's organization, and engaging their representatives in constructive dialogue, before crucial policy decisions are made on matters affecting them.

Finally, it would also be useful to investigate the attitude of operators of existing extension organizations towards the idea of integrating FOs into the extension network. This is more so since their cooperation will be needed to successfully implement this proposed modification to the currently existing approach, to extensions work execution.

====ENDS====



© **Tayo K. Solagbade** - B.Sc. Hons. Agricultural Extension Services | University of Ibadan, Oyo State.