

THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN EXTENSION SERVICES IN THE BIE PROVINCE (ANGOLA)

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Abstract

Extension services are playing the key role in rural development in Angola. The success of their activity depends on many factors including networking, well-organized dissemination of information, well-planned contents of courses meeting the needs of local population, etc. The survey is focused on the role of motivations in two target groups of extension services – farmers and extension agents in the framework of rural environment in Angola. The survey looks for various motives and drives in both groups in order to build them in into the planning of extension services. Based on the results of this study the extrinsic motives prevail in the extension agents' decision to enhance their competence. However, the intrinsic motives related to both personal as well as performance development are also represented. The intrinsic motives determining the engagement in activities within extension services predominated among the farmers.

Key words: extension services, motivation, Angola, rural development

INTRODUCTION

The two key actors in the extension performance are farmers as the target group of extension services and extension agents as the immediate providers of these services. In accordance with the statement of Chambers (2004) that participatory approach to extension has already become a part of its nature, the requirements of being active in development process are imposed on both groups. In addition, the requests on extension staff are rising in terms of complexity of its competencies which go beyond the pure agricultural aspects (Rivera and Alex, 2004; Hartmut et al., 1989). Extension is often considered as a missionary work and extension agents are often engaged as low paid civil servants with little career incentives (FAO, 2002). Extension organizations in Angola face the major problems of professional incompetence and lack of motivation among their employees. Consequently, this leads to very poor extension services, which are under no interest of farmers, and to the stagnation of rural development process. Hence, identifying of the drives in behaviour of both groups may contribute to the improvement in providing and accepting extension services.

Motives excite the dynamic processes in a personality. According to Hanušová (2006) motives can be considered as incentives leading to a certain activity or impeding to realize a certain activity. Motives can be divided into two

groups: intrinsic motives that come out of inside of the personality and extrinsic motives that are influenced by external stimulations. Kilvington et al. (1999) studied factors influencing motivation within farmers volunteering in local vector control groups in Sub-Saharan Africa. Two principal types of factors were noted: (I) subjective norms i.e., what the individual perceives to be the social pressures promoting certain behaviour and; (II) personal attitudes towards that behaviour. A combination of regulations, incentives and disincentives, and voluntary approaches can influence motivation factors in varying ways. Karbasioun (2007) defined three categories of motives of farmers in Iran for course attendance: (1) Personal Development; (2) Performance Development, (3) Extrinsic Motives. The categories (1) and (2) belong to intrinsic motives. Cleveland and Thompson (2007) studied the relationship between motivation and the level of voluntary action by graduates of an Extension education. Włodkowski (1985) defined six main factors influencing motivation: attitude, needs, stimulation, affect, competence, and reinforcement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey was carried out in the Bié Province in Angola as the part of the overall analysis of local exten-

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sion services in 2008 and 2009. The characteristics of all target groups were collected through utilization of various methods of RRA and PRA, and pilot tested questionnaires. The results from questionnaire inquiry were completed with the results from personal interview, focus group discussion and guided walks

The survey covered two principle target groups – 181 farmers (recipients of products of extension services) and 43 extension agents (providers of extension services). The survey looked for various aspects linked to individual motivation from the point of view of each group.

The specific research question posed in the survey of farmers was as follows: “What can motivate farmers’ decision to be involved in activities within extension services?” Two principal methods were used in this survey: focus group discussion and individual interviews. In the focus group discussion a group involving max. 15 farmers identified motives and drives as the answers on the research question. Their responses were collected, categorized and within individual interviews offered to farmers for further assessment with the use of five-point Likert scale such as: 1 – strongly agree; 2 – agree; 3 – do not know; 4 – disagree; 5 – strongly disagree. Furthermore, the farmers were asked about their overall experience with the extension services.

The second target group comprises extension agents. The specific research question was as follows: “What are the motivations of extension agents to attend courses and training to enhance their competencies?”. Motives and drives were defined and assessed within a focus group discussion. The assessment tool was the five-point Likert scale: 1 – strongly agree; 2 – agree; 3 – I do not know; 4 – disagree; 5 – strongly disagree.

The gathered data and information were analyzed with the help of the proper quantitative statistical methods. The descriptive (mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, percentage, frequency) analyses were used. The data were analyzed using STATGRAPHICS software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characterization of farmers

All the respondents are small peasants owning from 0.5 to 2.5 ha. All of them cultivate on either their own land or land belonging to their family. 33% (N = 60) work also on the rented land. All the respondents are directly involved in crop production. They cultivate mainly maize and beans (in a consortium) and cassava. Other crops cultivated by the respondents are as follows: tomatoes, onions, cabbage, potatoes and bananas. The latter mentioned usually serve as source of living while being

sold at a local market, for very low selling prices though. Livestock production is very rare. Only 12.2% (N = 22) of the respondents keep poultry and 10.5% (N = 19) keep goats and pigs.

The average age of the surveyed farmers is $M = 38.4$, which can imply that “older” and more experienced farmers were mainly investigated; however, the standard deviation is $SD = 13.7$. The standard deviation gives quite a wide age range – taking into account that an average life span of an Angolan counts 37.5 years, 14 years is almost one third of one’s life – in practice meaning a lot. Women represent 46.41% (N = 84) of the respondents; men represent 53.59% (N = 97) of the respondents. The exact gender balance was intended, but not achieved due to limitation factors of the survey. According to the results 91.15% (N = 81) of the respondents attended the school within the range 2–4 years. The most numerous education category is that of three years of school attendance (38.67%; N = 70); followed by the four-year school attendance (29.3%; N = 53).

Experience of farmers with extension services

The farmers were asked if they had ever been involved in any kind of extension activity. 72.4% (N = 131) of the farmers responded that they had participated in some training (which usually complemented the distribution programmes). The average perceived alignment of the training to address the real problems was 2.57 ($SD = 0.93$) which means that the respondents were only moderately satisfied. In terms of quality of implementation the average was 2.86 ($SD = 1.13$) as assessed with the five-point Likert scale. The result also implies only moderate quality of implementation.

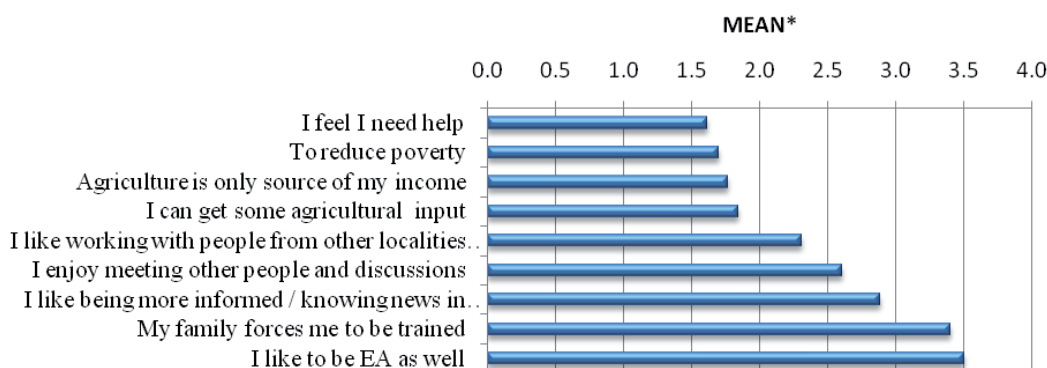
The additional questions on training evaluation were posed in order to find out partial as well as overall satisfaction with training. The aspects of training were assessed with the five-point Likert scale – see Table 1. The results show “good” overall satisfaction ($M = 1.94$; $SD = 0.99$) with the trainings. However, the partial satis-

Tab. 1: Assessment of training aspects (total N=181)

Aspects of training	MEAN*	SD
Organization of training (incl. timing and location)	2.66	0.97
Competency trainers	2.12	1.23
Training methods	2.78	0.84
Comprehensibility and language	2.98	0.92
Overall satisfaction	1.94	0.99

*the five point scale: 1 – very good; 2 – good; 3 – moderate; 4 – low; 5 – very low

Figure 1: Assessment of farmers' motivations for training attendance (total N = 181)



*five-point Likert scale: 1 – strongly agree; 2 – agree; 3 – do not know; 4 – disagree; 5 – strongly disagree

faction can ranges from “good” in case of competency of trainers to “moderate” in case of training methods. The lowest satisfaction was reported in case of comprehensibility and language ($M = 2.98$; $SD = 0.92$). Clearness, adequacy and comprehensibility of the content of training topics are fundamental factors influencing farmers' acceptance process. The trainers (mostly extension agents) should be more trained not only in the fundamentals related to their specifications but also their competency in other mentioned aspects should be deepened.

Research question: What can motivate farmers' decision to be involved in activities within extension services?

There were identified nine different motivations (Figure 1). Five of them can be classified as intrinsic (rank 1, 5, 6, 7, 9) and four as extrinsic (rank 2, 3, 4, 8). The motives “I feel I need help” achieved the highest rank ($M = 1.61$; $SD = 0.55$). Despite the fact that farmers feel confident in coping with daily stress they are fully aware of their weaknesses in coping with shocks. Thus, they believe more training and assistance of extension services might help them to better overcome difficult times. The second position of “to reduce poverty” motives ($M = 1.70$; $SD = 0.61$) supports the latter mentioned. The reality of a very high dependency on agriculture as the only source of family income is obvious from the third rank ($M = 1.76$; $SD = 0.55$). It is interesting to notice the social importance in motives for training attendance (rank 5, 6 and 7).

Characterization of extension agents

The survey covered 43 extension agents working in both governmental (MINADER) as well as non-governmental organization in the Bié Province. The selection criteria were as follows:

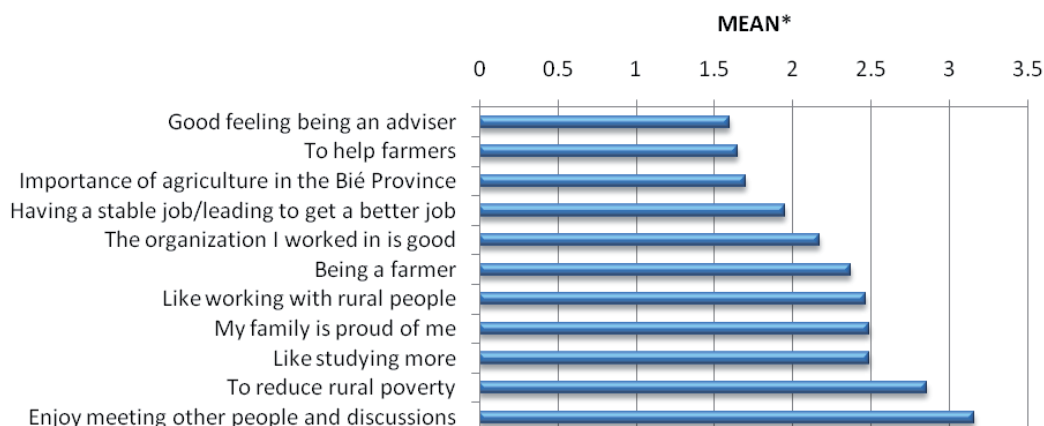
The extension agent should: (1) work as an extension agent at least for six months. The original plan was to contact only extension agents having been involved in extension service for at least two years. However, the author had to adjust this criterion according to the current situation when almost 56% of respondents have been working as extension agents less or equal to two years. (2) be willing to talk about her/his work; (3) be willing and able to respond questioners; and (4) be willing and able to participate in interviews, group discussions, guided tours and other survey methods.

Demographic profile of the extension agent shows that 70% ($N = 30$) of respondents were younger than 35 years which implies also less years of working experience. On the other hand it might imply higher education level of some younger extension agents. Almost half of the respondents studied at least 12 years which means they finished secondary education level. Related to gender distribution, only 21% ($N = 9$) respondents were female. Working profile of extension agents: governmental organizations counted slightly more (41.9%; $N = 18$) extension agents than NGOs (39.5%; $N = 17$). The half of the respondents (51.2%; $N = 22$) reported the working experience in agriculture counting from 6 to 20 years. On the other hand, more than 55% of the respondents have been involved in extension services for less than three years.

Research question: What are the motivations of extension agents to attend courses and training to enhance their competencies?

The results (Figure 2) show the greatest motivation for the extension agents is the personal satisfaction with the social status of an adviser ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 0.49$). The second important motivation is helping farmers at the second position ($M = 1.65$; $SD = 0.48$). The extension agents are very aware of the fact that agriculture is of high importance in the Bié Province and that it influences their

Figure 2: Motivation of extension agents (total N = 43)



*five point Likert scale: 1 – strongly agree; 2 – agree; 3 – I do not know; 4 – disagree; 5 – strongly disagree

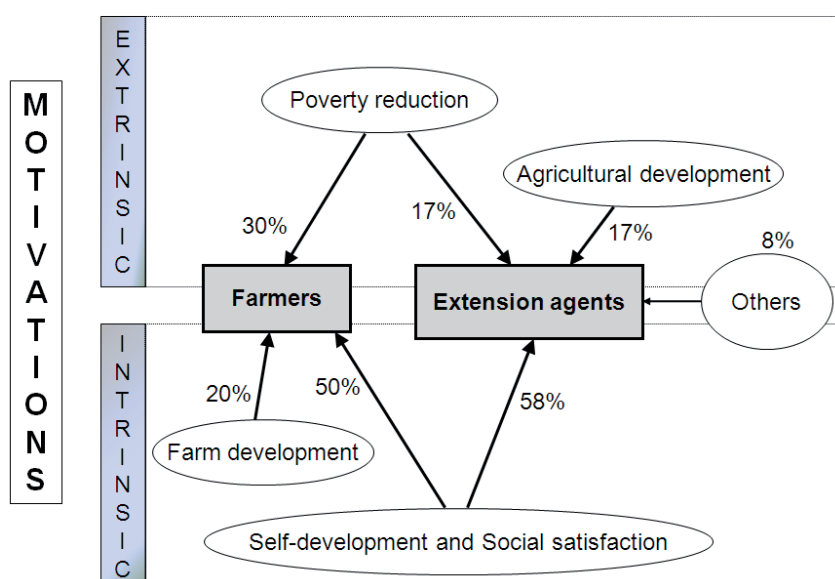
decision about seeking a job. The interesting result is also the high rate of motivation called “good organization”. According to the result ($M = 2.07$; $SD = 0.67$) the organizations, which the extension agents are working in, are considered as of good quality. The other aspects influencing of motivation of extension agents in being extension agents are as follows: working as an extension agent is considered as a stable job or through it one can reach better job in future; the fact that the current extension agent used to be a farmer or is a farmer as well also influences her/his decision; liking working with rural people; family pride; liking studying more; contributing to poverty alleviation and enjoying meeting other people and discussing.

The motivations influencing the work performance of both target groups were divided into three principle categories enabling them thus to be compared:

- I. Self-development and Social satisfaction
- II. Poverty reduction
- III. Farm/Agricultural development.

The relationships and percentage share of the motivations categories are given in Figure 3. According to the results, Self-development and Social satisfaction category is considered as the most important drive positively influencing the work of both farmers as well as extension agents. The need to alleviate poverty arises from general conditions of agriculture in the Bié province and is also perceived by both target groups. General development of agriculture from the point of view of extension agents is perceived as the significant extrinsic drive. Farm development can be, in fact, considered as agricultural development; however, from the individual point of view of each farmer. Hence, the drive is also intrinsic.

Figure 3: Categories of motivation – their relationships and percentage share



CONCLUSION

The success of extension services is based on the performance of extension agents. Only qualified, enthusiastic and self-confident extension agent can minister to improve farmers' livelihood. Based on the results of this study the extrinsic motives (such as helping farmers; importance of agricultural in the Bié Province; having a stable job; working in a good organization; proud of the family and poverty reduction) prevail in the extension agents' decision-making process to become a competent extension agents. However, the intrinsic motives related to both personal as well as performance development are also represented. Including the results from motives observation into the planning of in-service training for extension agents may substantially contribute to its effectiveness.

Surveyed farmers showed "good" overall satisfaction with training and courses that had experienced so far. Nevertheless, there is still wide room to enhance several training aspects such as organization, training methods and trainers' subject-matter competencies. The "hot" matter regards communication skills with the emphasis on knowledge of farmers' mother tongue and overall comprehensibility.

Farmers' motives can play a prominent role in extension agents' work. To provoke motivations in farmers' attitude to attend training or courses is a crucial factor in successful information transfer process. This study uncovers that intrinsic motives predominated among farmers. Methods such as observation and analytical approach to observed findings are critical in identification, understanding and reflecting farmers' motives.

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