

Agent-Related Factors Affecting the Performance of Agricultural Extension Staff in Abia State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT This study investigated agent-related factors that influence extension agents' field performance. Questionnaire and interview schedule were administered to 45 Block Extension Supervisors (BES) and 200 frontline Extension Agents (EAs). Statistical tools employed in data analysis include means, percentages and Pearson's correlation coefficient. Findings show that all the 20 affective work competencies identified were perceived as important for field performance by the Supervisors; and that the EAs in Abia State possessed most of the attributes. Agents personal characteristics that positively and significantly correlated with job performance were formal education ($r=0.32$), previous job experience ($r=0.21$), reason for joining extension service ($r=0.19$), childhood experience ($r=0.15$) and age ($r=0.17$). Sex ($r=-0.01$) and Marital status ($r=-0.02$) correlated negatively with performance. The paper recommends training and re-training of extension agents not only on technical agriculture, but also on educational psychology and communication techniques. They should, in addition, be adequately motivated through prompt payment of salaries, provision of work facilities and making their prospect for advancement on the job more certain.