ATTAINING SUSTAINABLE HIGHER SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIVES OF THE NIGERIAN RURAL DWELLERS USING EXTENSION EDUCATION SERVICES

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Abstract  
The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of extension Education services on the rural dwellers in Nigeria. Two Research Question and two hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive Survey was used to find out the availability and determine the influence of extension education services on the socio-economic lives of the rural dwellers. The sample size was 9000 adult rural dwellers. The instrument for data collection was face-validated by three experts. Using Cronbach Alpha the reliability yielded an index of 0.69 while the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient yielded a consistency index of 0.71 both at alpha levels of 0.05 significance. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null-hypotheses. The result of the study showed availability of the various extension education services in Nigeria. Extension Education services enhanced the rural dwellers of Nigeria socially and economically. Recommendations made included that Extension Education services should provide the rural dwellers with sex education, security education, co-habitation and information education; training and posting of extension education workers to local government areas; enlightenment of the rural populace on issues of socio-economic and political importance.

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Without prejudice, the traditional training programme has failed to satisfy the societal demands in the past with respect to development. Its inability to put things through necessitated many countries to discover the use of extension Education programmes to reach out to the less privileged in the remote areas. Extension education according to Jervis (2000) is a form of education that extends beyond the normal boundaries of the educational activities of the organization providing it. With “University extension” this means that it is not only directed to people that need it but also taken to them with all the necessary assistance.

In other words, the recipients in most cases do not have to go out looking or seeking for it. It is a kind of outreach programme designed to cater for the needs of the rural dwellers and other adult citizens. These categories comprise teachers, teenagers and everybody in the society. It is an instructional activity structured using the resources of educational institution to serve a wide diversified clientele within its region through extension programmes. This extension programme may take the form of short courses like radio and television course, correspondence, conferences, workshop and seminars, etc.

Definition of Extension Education, according to Cleaver (1993), is a provision of effective managerial decision in respective life skills. If education should mean the transmission of a people’s culture to those willing to learn it, it then presupposes that these ways of life of the people (education) should be relevant enough to solve everyday problems of life.

Martin (2002), saw extension education as portraying relevant ideas to people with a view to enhancing positive change in their standard of living. Ijere (1992) asserts that extension education is a dynamic and ever changing education, which continues to get modified. This assertion by Ijere goes on to strengthen the philosophical dictum that everything is subject to change. What this suggests, is that so long as the society is in constant flux, extension education and all it provides keep changing too. William in Okedera (1981:198) saw extension education as “voluntary out-of-school education programmes requiring imparting knowledge through interactive process.” Basically extension education is simply an educational process that brings about changes in the behaviour of the clientele.
Highlighting the roles of extension education services, Jones and Clifford as quoted in NAFES (2005) said that the essence of extension (agricultural) is to facilitate interplay and nurture synergies within a total information system involving research in the particular area be it agriculture, education etc, and a vast complex of information providing businesses.

In support, Johnson (2005) noted that the interest and needs of the people differ from individual to individual, from village to village and from block to block as well as from state to state. The programme offered to them must be dynamic to cater for these differences in interests and needs of the people. In this way extension education is essential because it has the capacity and the capability to provide for such differences even within the framework of a particular problem situation.

Soucie (2006) opined that extension education provides statewide leadership in local rural community development efforts, which encompass the social, economic and physical needs of communities.

According to Gaaya (2004), in many developing countries such as Nigeria, half or more of the rural population live in poverty. This situation calls for intensified effort to brace up with the challenges of extension education to bring up the rural youth and women socially, reduce poverty in the rural areas and empower the rural youth and women.

Extension education and rural development project according to Ugwuoke (1992) are the major means of raising the standard of living of people in the rural areas. Such education and the projects provide opportunities for impacting socially and economically on the rural dwellers. Bozeman (2006) sees socio-economic importance of extension education services as being able to assess social and economic interests and needs of the community. It also helps in determining programme priorities while delivering and being able to evaluate high quality programmes.

Nigeria has 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory with as many as 782 local government areas. The country is mainly rural in nature with the indication that the larger population is rural dwellers. This has been affirmed by Idike in Olisa and Obiukwu (1993:65) “...population is the main characteristic that differentiates rural from urban areas especially in developing countries like Nigeria”. Quoting the 1963 census, Idike (1993:68) also observed that any area that has a population of 20,000 people and below is classified as rural. He equally observed other determining factors for a rural area such as depression, degradation and deprivation, he continued, that many rural villages are immersed in poverty so palpable that the people are the embodiment of it. In
most rural areas in Nigeria, basic infrastructure, where they exist at all, are meaningless development. The major occupation of these rural habitations are farming, trading and hawking. Essential products such as cattle, goats, sheep, donkey, horses, yam, cereal, salad-vegetables, palm produce, etc, are commonly found in these rural areas. The National Policy on Education (2004), is the country’s educational blueprint which has singled out education as an instrument per excellence for national development. According to the policy, education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plan, because it is the most important instrument for change. Development has to do with expansion in size and weight of a programme.

Statement of the Problem
Extension education services provided for the people help in improving their lives especially in the rural areas. The rural dwellers need improved social and economic lives through the dissemination of extension education services. Inadequate training and grooming of extension personnel and inadequate funding may significantly create barrier to dissemination of relevant information. It is not known presently if the extension workers operating in the area under study are properly trained, groomed and retrained to brace up with the tasks before them. This study sets out to find out the influence of extension education training of extension education workers on the Nigerian rural dwellers. Good health habits and clean environments are necessary conditions for the development of the rural areas. It is pertinent to look at health related matters as HIV/AIDS, clean surroundings, personal hygiene and veterinary/animal care. These have direct influence on the lives of these rural dwellers.

The findings of this study will be significant enough to explicate issues that are inherent in implementation of extension education programmes. The findings of this study will generally provide policy makers, agencies and the target group the opportunity of knowing the possibility of selecting the appropriate extension education programmes for the rural dwellers putting into consideration the nature of the target group.

Research Questions
To guide this study, the following research questions were asked:
1. What types of extension education services are available in Nigeria with respect to the socio-economic lives of the rural dwellers?
2. Do extension education services provided to the Nigerian rural dwellers influence their socio-economic lives?
Hypotheses

1. There is no significance difference in the mean rating of the respondents on the type of available extension education services and the strategies of providing them in Nigeria.

2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the respondents on the factors influencing extension education services and strategies used in their provision in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study employed a survey approach which was determined to find out the availability or otherwise of extension education services in the area under study as well as their socio-economic impact on the rural dwellers.

Area of Study

This study was conducted in three states in South Eastern Nigeria namely, Enugu, Anambra and Ebonyi comprising 17, 21 and 13 Local Government Areas respectively. The South East zone was chosen because the rural setting comprises of peasant farmers, petty traders, artisans, public servants, and so on. With this, certain level of extension education should be made available to assist them in uplifting their socio-economic well being.

The population for this study consisted of all the adult rural dwellers within South East zone from which 9 communities were randomly selected (three from each state). A total population of 9,000 adults was used for the study after a purposive random sampling.

Sampling Technique

Nine rural autonomous communities were used for the study. For each Local Government Area a simple purposive random sampling was conducted and a sample size of 1000 adult rural dwellers was drawn.

Instrument for Data Collection

A set of questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of 8 items in the first cluster and 7 items in the second cluster which elicited information on the availability and influence of extension education services in the area.

These items were rated in a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree weighted 4,3,2,1, respectively.

The instrument for data collection was face-validated by three experts. Cronbach Alpha formula at 0.05 level of significance was used to find out the reliability which yielded an index of 0.68 while The Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used which consistency index was 0.72 both at 0.05 levels of significance.
Method of Data Collection

The researcher administered the questionnaire within unanimously accepted days to the respondents (the adult rural dwellers), and responses collected personally and with the help of the research assistants. The less educated amongst the population for the study were aided in filling the questionnaire to avoid mutilation and common opinion among the respondents so as to ensure a reliable result.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data collected were used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses that guided the study. Mean scores were used to answer the research questions while t-test was employed at 0.05 significant level to test the null hypotheses. The criterion for accepting the items is a mean \( x \) of 2.5 and above while below 2.5 of mean \( x \) indicated non-acceptance.

Research Question 1

1. What types of extension education services are available in Nigeria with respect to the socio-economic lives of the rural dwellers?

Table 1: Items 1 a-h are on the types of Extension Education Services Made Available in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The Following Extension Education Services Are Available In My Area:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Agricultural extension services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Healthy living extension services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Co-operative extension services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Home management extension services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Literacy extension services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Family planning extension services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS campaign extension services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Any other specify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand mean ((x)) score</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Data in Table 1 above showed a grand mean of 2.99. As the criterion for accepting a particular item is 2.5 and above, the grand mean of 2.99 is an indication of the availability of the various extension education services in Nigeria.

**Research Question 2**
2. Do extension education services provided to the Nigerian rural dwellers influence their socio-economic lives?

**Table 2: Items 2 a-g on the Influence of Extension Education Services on the Rural Dwellers of Nigeria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Grand Mean</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Positively affected the lives of my people</td>
<td>5100</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Made my people economically more viable</td>
<td>2150</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Made farmers to learn better farming practices</td>
<td>3280</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Provided better health Education</td>
<td>4600</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Provided more social services such as health centre, water,</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>electricity, radios, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Politically empowered people more than</td>
<td>2980</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Improved the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS in my area</td>
<td>3980</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Mean</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 above revealed that extension education services provided in Nigeria had positively influenced the socio-economic lives of the rural dwellers with a grand mean of 3.12.

Hypothesis 1 (HO1)
There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the respondents on the type of available extension education services and strategies used in the provision of extension education services in Nigeria. The hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis Comparing the Mean Rating of Respondents on the Type of Available Extension Education Services and the Strategies used in the Provision of the Extension Education Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available Education Services</td>
<td>9000</td>
<td>3.0516</td>
<td>0.85838</td>
<td>0.0286</td>
<td>1.217</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for provision</td>
<td>9000</td>
<td>3.0011</td>
<td>0.90158</td>
<td>0.03005</td>
<td>1.217</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 3 above, the calculated t is 1.217 and the critical value of t at 0.05 level of significance and 1798 degrees of freedom is 1.96. Since the critical value of t of 1.96 exceeds the calculated value of 1.217, the t obtained is not significant. The stated null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of respondents on the type of available extension education services and the strategies for providing the extension education services in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2 (HO2)
There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the respondents on the factors influencing extension education services and the strategies used in the provision of extension education services in Nigeria. The hypothesis was also tested using t-test statistics as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Summary of t-test Analysis Comparing the Mean Rating of the Factors Influencing Extension Education Services and the Strategies used in the Provision of the Extension Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factors</td>
<td>9000</td>
<td>3.0851</td>
<td>0.87142</td>
<td>0.02905</td>
<td>2.010</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Unaccepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>9000</td>
<td>3.0011</td>
<td>0.90158</td>
<td>0.03005</td>
<td>2.010</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Unaccepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From Table 4 above, the calculated \( t \) value is 2.010 while the critical value of \( t \) at 0.05 level of significance and 1798 degrees of freedom is 1.96. Since the calculated \( t \) value of 2.010 is greater than the critical \( t \) value of 1.96, the \( t \) obtained is significant. The stated null hypothesis is rejected. There is therefore a significant difference in the mean rating of respondents on the factors influencing extension education services and the strategies used in the provision of extension education services in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Available Extension Education Services

Data in Table 1 revealed that agricultural extension services are provided in Nigeria. The mean of 2.99 indicates the presence of agricultural extension education services. This is true as the area under study is rural with subsistent agriculture forming a large part of the people's occupation. The mean score of 3.12 on the practice of healthy living as provided by extension education in the area under study also indicates the fast transformation of some parts of the zone from very rural setting to sub-urban. In the same way the existence of co-operative extension services with a mean of 3.12 can be explained by the eastern gateway nature of the area where commerce and small scale industries are thriving and continue to grow. The mean of 2.68 on home management and 3.02 on literacy services in the area under study implied that the area was developing, and that there was need for proper management of the home. On the other hand, the increase in the volume of commerce and the growth of settlements call for literacy and general education and could explain the high mean score of the respondents.

With growth and development and with acquisition of more education and enlightenment, the need for family planning/child spacing would arise. The mean score of 3.42 is therefore the result of the people being better informed as a result of extension education services. In the same way, the mean score of 2.87 on the availability of HIV/AIDS extension education services shows a welcome development in such area that serves as a melting pot of people and a meeting point of travelers from far and near, and from all walks of life.

The grand mean score of 2.99 is in agreement with Hendry (1993) and Omekene, (2004) who believed that when parents are more informed on today's problems, they can advise their children on how to make life choices and to stay clear of problems such as HIV/AIDS. From the findings of this study parents and children alike are informed and have become aware of the things that are trendy in their society. By so doing the people would be ready to face challenges and so live better.

Influence of Extension Education Services on Socio-economic Lives of the People

Analysis in Table 2 revealed that on the item on the positive effect of...
extension education services on the lives of people in the community in the area under study, the mean score of 3.38 meant acceptance that extension education services provided in the area positively affected the lives of the people, whereas extension education making the people economically more viable had a mean score of 2.92 which is also acceptable. On the item on making farmers to have better farming practices, the mean score of 2.86 was got while on the provision of health education, the mean score of 3.33 was got. It was also indicated that more social services such as health centre, water, electricity, roads etc. were provided by a mean score of 3.36 just as the ability of the services to empower the people more politically than before had a mean score of 2.82. Lastly the item which stated that extension education services provided in the area had improved the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS had a score of 3.22. It is important to remark that the area being a meeting point of travelers would ordinarily have incidences of HIV and AIDS but with enlightenment, those living with HIV/AIDS would get some succor and live better. A grand mean of 3.12 is an indication that extension education services had positively impacted on the people of Nigeria.

Analysis on Table 3 at an alpha level of 0.05 of significance and 1798 degrees of freedom indicated that the calculated t of 1.217 is less than the critical t of 1.96. The null hypothesis was not rejected and so there is no significant difference in the mean rating of the respondents on the type of available extension education services and the strategies used in the provision of extension education services to the rural dwellers of Nigeria.

According to the analysis on Table 4 the calculated t value of 2.010 is greater than the critical t value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 1798 degrees of freedom. The obtained t value is therefore significant. The stated null hypothesis is as a result of that rejected.

**Conclusion**

This study was aimed at identifying the influence of extension education services on the socio-economic lives of the rural dwellers of Nigeria.

The findings revealed that agricultural extension, healthy living extension, cooperative extension, home management extension, literacy extension, family planning extension and HIV/AIDS extension education services are provided to the rural dwellers under study. Also extension education services provided have positively influenced the socio-economic lives of the rural dwellers.

On the other hand there is no significant difference in the mean rating of the respondents on the type of available extension education services and the strategies in use in the provision...
of the services to the Nigerian rural dwellers.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Extension education services to be provided to the rural dwellers should include among others, sex education, security education, co-habitation and information education.

2. Extension education workers should be trained in states and posted to local government areas with status likened to those of teachers and or counsellors. Their activities should be time-tabled in most formal settings to ensure effectiveness.

3. More campaign strategies and more effort should be put in the enlightenment of the rural populace on issues of socio-economic and political importance.

4. Institutes, faculties and colleges of education should help in advancing the living standard of the people. It will also groom students in the art of research while providing enough information for researchers and educationists.

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