

Mind-sets of Extension Officers: A Small Survey

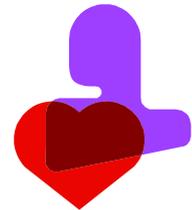
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T. Miyoshi

1. Background

Field-level extension officers such as CEO/BEO (Camp / Block Extension Officers) are the first contact person for farmers, the main client of MACO. RESCAP (Rural Extension Services Capacity Advancement Project) is targeting MACO's extension system in which the field level extension officers (i.e. CEO/BEO) play important roles to deliver MACO's extension services to farmers. MACO together with cooperating partners have made efforts to improve the extension system, but the service level of extension still seems to be unchanged and still face with challenges.

Some important issues relating to improvement of extension officers' performance could be more psychological than physical (or logistical). Capacity development should also cover psychological issues like motivation. Thus, there is always a need to learn the mind-sets of extension officers for capacity development of the extension officers.



In the mid of February, nearly 50 field officers participated a training for WFP-funded PaViDIA Program in Western Province. The author found that that was a good chance to get some data related to mind-set of the extension officers. A one sheet questionnaire was quickly prepared and distributed among participants (MACO field-level extension officers). The followings are the results.

2. Objectives of Study

- To learn the mind-set of the extension officers from participants in the training
- To draw practical implications for improving motivation of extension officers

3. Survey Design

A questionnaire sheet was prepared. Since the survey was conducted during the busy training, the number of the questions was limited to 50 and all questions were designed as choice-and-check style. The respondent should choose his/her level of agreement in each statement. The statements were drawn from five categories such as "image of own as extension officers", "relationship with clients (farmers)", "relationship with bosses (district staff)", "confidence of own skills and knowledge" and "work environments and conditions". Identities were omitted for freeing the extension officers from the fear of censorship. (See the attachment A.)

A total of fifty (50) copies of a questionnaire sheet were distributed among the extension officers who were participants in the training for WFP-funded PaViDIA Program in Western Province. From distributed fifty (50) copies, thirty-four (34)

sheets were collected.

4. Results

4.1. Self-image as Extension Officers

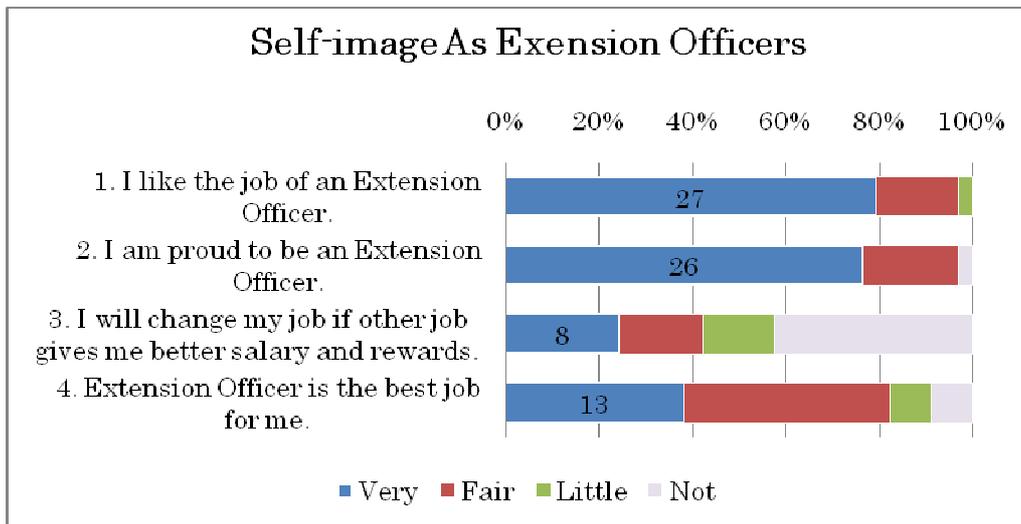


Figure 4-1

Above graph shows that self-image of the respondents and their level of affirmation to their job as extension officers. The number within the bar chart indicates actual numbers of response of “Yes, agree very much in the statement”. The respondents seem to like their job and be proud as extension officers. For some respondents, this affirmative attitude is still sustainable even if the other job provides better salary.

4.2. Relationship with Farmers

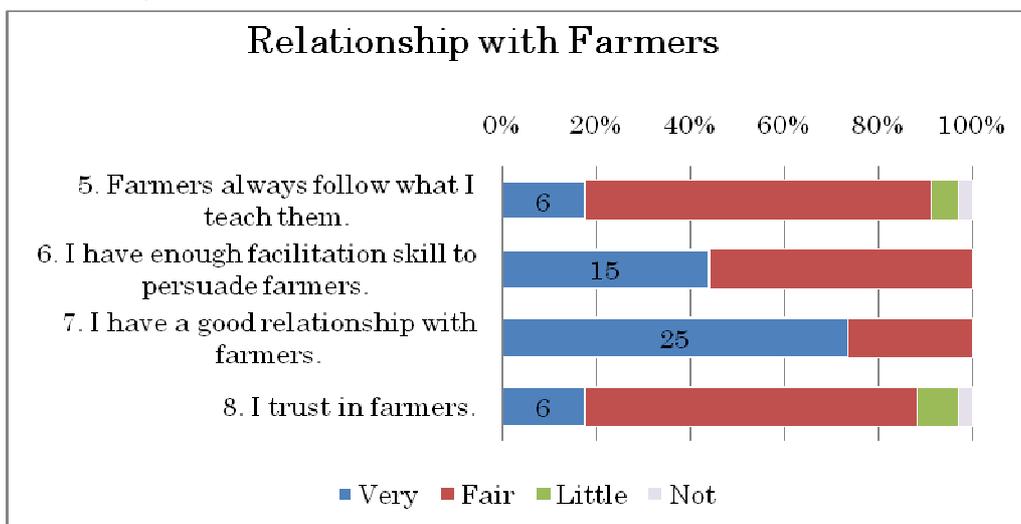


Figure 4-2

Relationship with farmers is a fundamental for successful extension service. The human relationship seems to be good condition as no one was against for the statement of “good relationship”. Besides, good human relationship does not seem to be related to good extension relationship as the number of agreement in statement 5 “Farmers always follow what I teach” is not high. The number of agree in “I trust in farmers” is not high. Relationship is also on “trust”. If you do not trust him, he does not trust in you.

4.3. Relationship with Boss (District staff)

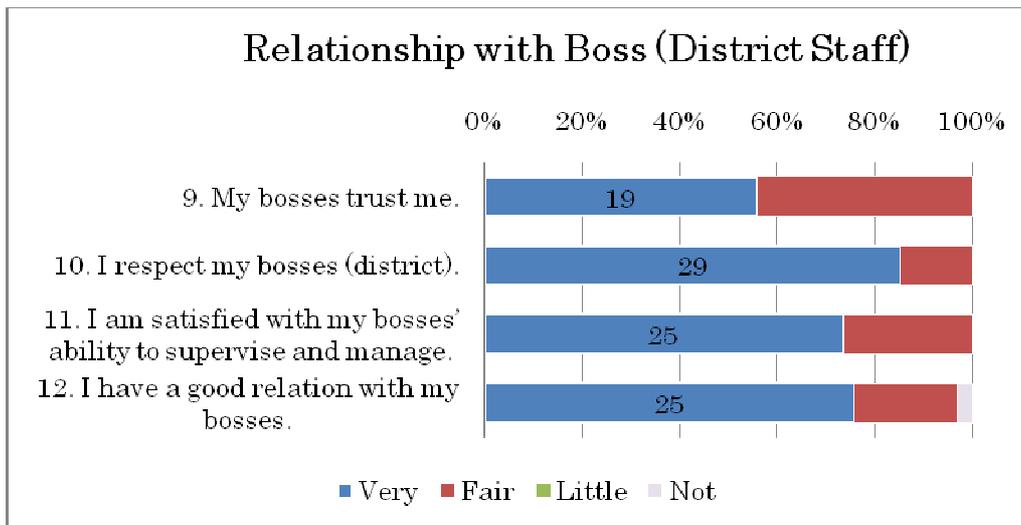


Figure 4-3

The statements related to “relationship with supervisors (bosses)” are highly appreciated. The good relationship seems to be accrued from the respect of the extension officers towards to the bosses.

4.4. Knowledge and Skills As Extension Officers

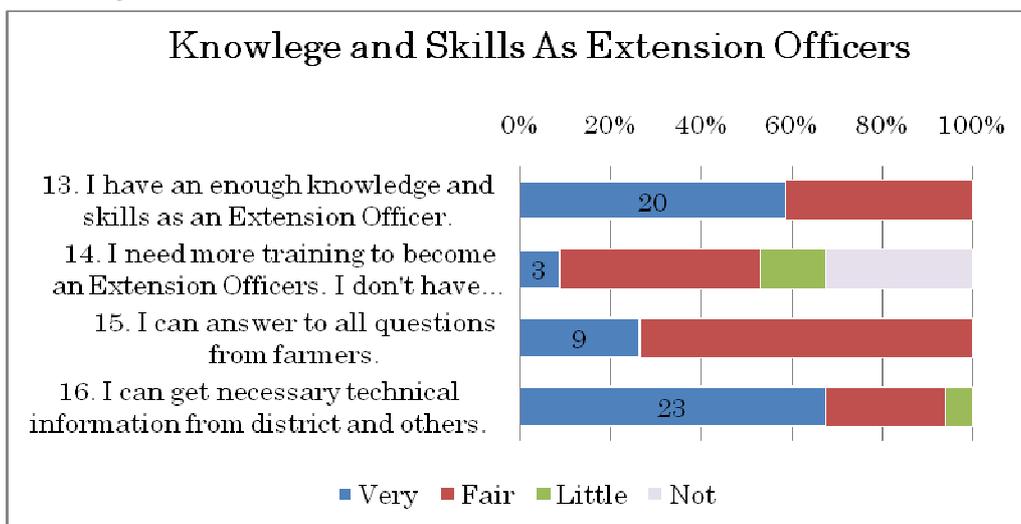


Figure 4-4

The majority believes that they have enough knowledge to be an extension officer. Meanwhile, needs for further training was found for some officers. The majority said that they receive necessary technical information from district. This appreciation for district staff as informers seems to influence on the good relationship of the extension officers with districts.

4.5. Work Environment and Conditions

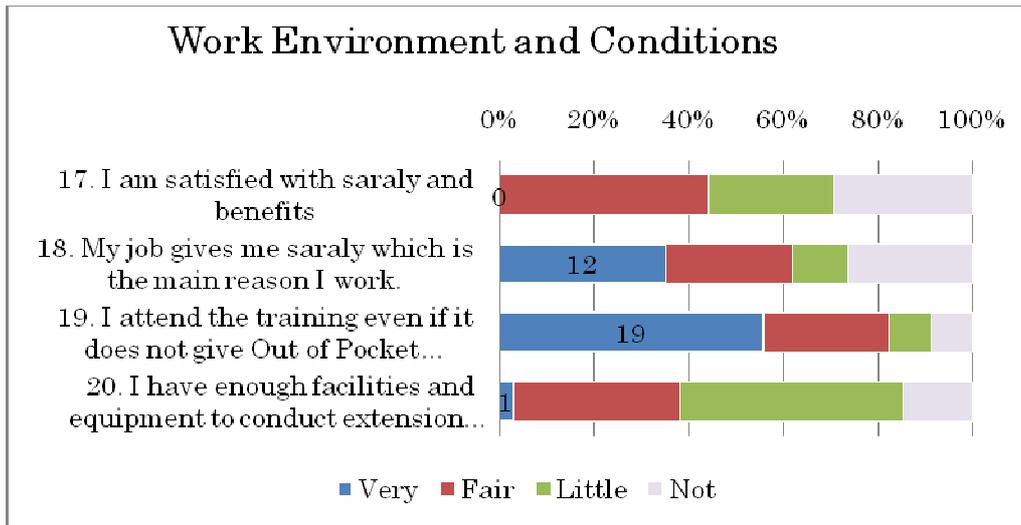


Figure 4-5

As expected, the respondents said that salary and benefits from job are not very satisfactory. However, salary is not always necessarily the main reason to work. Moreover, it is encouraging to know that Out of Pocket is not always the determinant of the attendance of the trainings. Facilities and equipment to conduct extension works were thought to be unsatisfactory.

4.6. Comparative Evaluation of the Statement (i.e. Most popular statement)

In the questionnaire, the respondent was asked to pick five most agreeable statements from the first to the fifth. For analyzing the preferences, the first-picked statement was pointed “5” and the fifth-picked statement was pointed “1”. The points were averaged and ranked in the top ten statements as follows.

Table 4-6

Rank	statements	Value
1	I am proud to be an Extension Officer.	2.09
2	I have a good relation with my bosses.	1.29
3	I respect my bosses (district).	1.18
4	I am satisfied with my bosses’ ability to supervise and manage.	0.94
5	I have an enough knowledge and skills as an Extension Officer.	0.88
6	I have a good relationship with farmers.	0.79
7	I like the job of an Extension Officer.	0.68
8	I can get necessary technical information from district and others.	0.68
9	I attend the training even if it does not give Out of Pocket Allowance.	0.50
10	Extension Officer is the best job for me.	0.41

The most popular statement is “I am proud to be an Extension Officers”. Affiliation to extension job is also identified in rank 7 and rank 10. As a category, “relationship to bosses” statements are prevailing as they are appearing from rank 2 to rank 5. Again, it is encouraging that some officers picked the statement of “I attend the training even if it does not give Out of Pocket Allowance”.

4.7. Factor Analysis of the Statement

Factor analysis aims to identify underlying variables, or “factors”, that explain the pattern of correlations within a set of observed variables. Factor analysis is often used in data reduction to identify a small number of factors that explain most of the variance that is observed in a much larger number of manifest variables. With averaged points of 20 statements, factor analysis was conducted.

Table 4-7

Component Matrixa							Total Variance Explained = 73.5%
	Component						Statement
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
S1	.722	-.310	-.267	.089	-.137	.066	I like the job of an Extension Officer.
S2	.750	-.249	-.377	.106	.168	-.193	I am proud to be an Extension Officer.
S3	-.543	-.003	.204	.128	-.354	.008	I will change my job if other job gives me bet
S4	.730	.041	-.408	-.229	.011	.246	Extension Officer is the best job for me.
S5	.675	.289	.373	.015	-.030	-.240	Farmers always follow what I teach them.
S6	.325	.160	-.300	.484	-.348	.047	I have enough facilitation skill to persuade fa
S7	.429	.096	.426	.232	.053	.553	I have a good relationship with farmers.
S8	.059	.545	.395	.369	-.052	-.161	I trust in farmers.
S9	.491	.283	.359	-.286	-.353	-.033	My bosses trust me.
S10	.085	.287	-.429	-.295	.178	-.452	I respect my bosses (district).
S11	-.024	.767	-.081	-.247	-.308	.064	I am satisfied with my bosses' ability to supe
S12	.181	.462	-.471	-.289	-.302	.362	I have a good relation with my bosses.
S13	-.012	.377	.013	.703	.246	.103	I have an enough knowledge and skills as an
S14	.431	-.300	.319	-.015	-.389	-.451	I need basic training to become an Extension
S15	-.031	.516	-.286	.197	.634	-.084	I can answer to all questions from farmers.
S16	.206	.619	.333	-.274	.301	-.039	I can get necessary technical information fro
S17	.424	-.355	.076	.298	.222	-.043	I am satisfied with saraly and benefits
S18	.759	.177	.009	.241	-.125	-.127	My job gives me saraly, this is the main reasc
S19	.319	-.122	.372	-.447	.467	-.064	I attend the training even if it does not give (
S20	.352	-.262	.270	-.207	.206	.476	I have enough facilities and equipment to cor

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

After the analysis, the 20 statements seemed to be explained by 6 possible factors. With 6 factors, 73.5% of the total variance of all statement was covered. In other words, the statements were explained by 6 factors influencing the mind-sets of the extension officers. The statements valued more than 0.5 in absolute value are colored for identification.

The first factor is composed by statements related to the affiliation to extension jobs (S1 to S4), relationship with farmers (S5, S6) , boss’s trust (S9), need for basic training (S14) and satisfaction to job conditions (S17, S18). This group seems be interpreted to be related to the self-esteem of the extension officers. So, this factor can be named “self-esteem”.

The second factor is composed by statements related to the trust in farmers (S8), relation with bosses (S11, S12), technical level (S15) and technical information support from district (S16). This group seems to be interpreted as “work environment” or “readiness to work”.

The third factor is composed by statements like relationship with farmers in positive ways, but relationship with bosses with negative ways. It is very difficult to interpret but it may be said that extension officers working too close to farmers (or fields) have less contacts from district staff. This factor seems to “inclination to field works”.

The fourth factor is composed of statements related skills and knowledge of

extension staff (S6, S13) in a positive way, but Out of Pocket as the determinant (S19) in a negative way. This could be named “Technical confidence”. This positive-negative relation may tell that extension officers with enough knowledge and skills will not attend training without Out of Pocket allowance. In other words, some extension officers will attend the training even the training is unnecessary because of allowance.

The fifth factor is composed by statements related technical confidence of extension officers (S15) and Out of Pocket as the determinant (S19) in both positive ways. This is contradictory to the fourth factor. But this may tell us that high confident extension officers would love to learn more things to participate in various training even without allowance.

The sixth factor is like third factor, i.e. it is composed by statements of relationship with farmers in positive ways, but relationship with bosses with negative ways. It is also related with facilities and equipment issues in positive ways. This could be explained as if the relationship with farmers and equipment is satisfactory; the extension officers are very much relying on the district to support.

5. Some Implications from the Study

Analysis of the data of this survey revealed some aspects of mind-sets of the extension officers. First of all, the extension officers have self-esteem (a proud) as being a government extension officer. Self-esteem is a fundamental component of being a good worker. The improvement of their performance should be conducted by calling for their self-esteem to be fully realized.

The relationship with bosses (i.e. district staff) seems to play a very important role in the mind-set of the extension officers. Close supervision from the bosses is critical to motivate the field officers. Performance improvement of the extension officers should be conducted together with full involvement of district staff.

It is encouraging to know that Out of Pocket Allowance is not always a determinant for attending at training. It requires further study, but the factor analysis seemed imply that Out of Pocket Allowance is too attractive and it misleads the selection of the trainees in need of knowledge and skills.

Finally, this psychological study revealed the complexity of human mind, and this complexity should be taken in consideration for planning a motivation strategy for improvement of performance of extension officers.

(END)

Please evaluate how much you agree in each statement. (please tick)

No.	Statement	Very	Fair	Little	Not
Ex.	<i>(example) I work very hard.</i>			V	
1	I am proud to be an Extension Officer.				
2	I am satisfied with my bosses' ability to supervise and manage.				
3	I will change my job if other job gives me better salary and rewards.				
4	Extension Officer is the best job for me.				
5	I have a good relation with my bosses.				
6	I have an enough knowledge and skills as an Extension Officer.				
7	I can answer to all questions from farmers.				
8	I need more training to become an Extension Officers, I don't have enough knowledge and skills..				
9	I respect my bosses (district).				
10	I can get necessary technical information from district and others.				
11	I attend the training even if it does not give Out of Pocket Allowance.				
12	I have enough facilitation skill to persuade farmers.				
13	My job gives me salary which is the main reason I work.				
14	I have a good relationship with farmers.				
15	I trust in farmers.				
16	I have enough facilities and equipment to conduct extension works.				
17	I am satisfied with salary and benefits				
18	Farmers always follow what I teach them.				
19	My bosses trust me.				
20	I like the job of an Extension Officer.				

Please select the most five (5) statement with which you agree mostly. from the above list. Put numbers.

First = ()	2 nd = ()	3 rd = ()	4 th = ()	5 th = ()
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↑ Put them in order of importance. Put the number in above blank.