The Influence of Rewards and Recognition on Productivity Levels among Extension Officers in the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

While the civil service reform program has been continually hailed by the donor community as the solution to the poor performance in the Kenyan civil service, it has continued to draw wide criticisms from different stakeholders, including those involved one way or the other in the Kenyan agricultural sector. This is because there has been a steady decline in the sufficiency of (extension) services provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, the key provider of agricultural extension services in Kenya. A study conducted by the info tool incorporated, a business diagnostic services organization based in Massachusetts, in the United states of America, found that some of the factors that can contribute to poor performance among employees in any given organization include poor leadership, lack of team work among employees, lack of an effective rewards and recognition system, a poor work environment, among others. Consequently, based on the available literature, several factors can be cited as the possible causes for the declining performance among extension officers in the Ministry of Agriculture. These could include: lack of rewards and recognition for outstanding service, a poor career development system and a poor work environment. The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of rewards and recognition on productivity levels among extension officers in the ministry of Agriculture. This was a case study which sought to identify the effects lack of an efficient rewards and recognition system had on productivity levels among extension officers with an aim of opening doors for further research on the same and recommend strategies for addressing the problems to ensure that the country becomes (once again) self sufficient in food production. There were a total of 45 extension officers in Bahari District, which had just been annexed from Kilifi District. Given the number of officers, a census was done, where all the officers were given questionnaires, followed by a focus group discussion for triangulation purposes. This is because it was only through a census that more comprehensive and accurate information could be gotten. The data collected was analyzed for any causal-effect relationships, correlations and variances, by use of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS), and the results presented in pie charts and tables to give a picture of the research findings at a glance. The findings on rewards and recognition revealed that the employees in the ministry of agriculture are not satisfied with the rewards and levels of recognition for the jobs they do, with the overall feeling being that they are neither rewarded nor recognised for their work. Low compensations levels were cited as a major source of poor motivation among the employees. The study thus recommends that the Ministry of Agriculture considers improving its rewards and recognition programme for its extension officers for increased productivity. The ministry should effect professionalism and equity in staff promotions, improve holistic facilitation of field staff, and improve on the general staff motivation strategies (revise allowances and other benefits).

Keywords: Employee Rewards, Employee Recognition, Employee Performance and Organizational Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Workers in any given organization like to feel appreciated and valued, and one of the ways for an organization to express this to the workers is by having a reward and recognition system (policy). According to Dempsey (1999), a manager must continuously recognize and reward good performance by giving praise and positive feedback, which works to create enthusiasm and as the essayist Emerson ((1803 - 1882) pointed out, Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. Praise and positive feedback works as a motivator for employees to ensure that they give their best to the organization and thus help the organization to achieve its goals and
objectives. The Ministry of Agriculture like any other ministry in the civil service has a reward system which includes salaries, allowances, and other benefits which act as motivators for employees to give their best services in service (Government of Kenya, 2005). Unfortunately, many extension workers argue that the benefits are not commensurate to the hardships they face as they dispense their duties and thus not enough to motivate them to offer their best. This has led to a situation where extension workers feel unsupported by their employer and this has consequently affected their production levels.

The above scenario has worked to reinforce the reciprocity norm of the social exchange theory (Rollinson, 2002), which argues that the basic motivation to enter into a relationship with anyone (or any organization) is the expectation of obtaining rewards of some sort. It then means that employees need to feel and perceive support from their employer to achieve their potential in service. This is because as Clemet (1997) points out, when employees perceive support from the organization, they not only value their organization more, but they go out of their way to actively collaborate to help in the achievement of their organization’s goals and objectives. Thomas and Ganster (1995) further argue, organizational support is positively related to job satisfaction. On the other hand, Ugboro and Obeng (2000) point out that, employees who feel supported show better psychological well-being, higher job satisfaction and better performance. Corroborating this information, Roadho and Eisenberger (2002), in a meta-analysis of 70 studies, observe that the relationship between support and job satisfaction is in all cases positive, with a magnitude between “moderate” to “strong”.

Organizational support to extension officers in the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya has not been good and can be argued as one of the causes for the poor performance (Marwa and Mohamed, 2009). This is because, extension officers do not enjoy regular promotions and salary increments to go along with the changing economic times, and this coupled with other factors like a feeling of neglect by the employees can be argued as one of the factors which could have led to high turnover rates in the Ministry of Agriculture (Marwa and Mohamed 2009).

While Rollison, (2002) defines productivity as the quantity of outputs obtained from a given level of inputs, and which is influenced by the variety of skills, characteristics and attitudes, including formal training and qualifications, motivation levels, initiative, team skills, attention to detail, judgement, multi-task abilities, communication skills, general attitudes and work ethos, Saari, (2006) refers to productivity as a measure of the output from a production process per unit of output. He goes on to argue that labour productivity is measured as a ratio of output per labor-hour, and input. In this case, therefore, the word “productivity” will be used to refer to the number of man-hours the extension officer spends with the farmers and the resultant increase in on-farm food production.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There has been a general outcry on the insufficient extension services provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, the main provider of agricultural extension services in Kenya, and the main conduit of innovations in new agricultural technologies from the research stations to the farmers (Government of Kenya, 2004). Several explanations have been offered for this trend, the key one being the lack of adequate frontline extension workers. This problem has been made worse by the loss of extension workers through different avenues, for example death, retirement, sacking or resignation (Government of Kenya, 2009). The high turnover has been a source of frustration to the ministry of Agriculture and the government of Kenya at large. This is because, as leCrone (2006) points out, high employee turnover leads to a loss of productivity, diminished morale, strained communications between management and the employees, and increased costs of hiring and training new employees. This has forced the ministry to review its reward policies and come up with perks like further education for its employees, promotion after every three years, and a faster processing of retirement benefits (Government of Kenya, 2004). This has unfortunately not served the purpose of motivating the workers, since the earnings (even after salary increments) are not sufficient to cushion the workers against the changing economic times. This has left the extension workers disillusioned.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, 80% of Kenyans live in the rural areas and derive their livelihoods from agriculture (Government of Kenya, 2004). There are three million farming families who need agricultural
extension services to realise any sufficiency in agricultural production (Encyclopaedia of Nations, 2009). With only 3,396 extension officers employed by the ministry of Agriculture (Government of Kenya, 2009), there is a dire need to address the motivation of the few agricultural extension officers. In addition, the few officers are expected to cover vast areas and most of the time on foot. Lack of allowances for lunch, transport reimbursements (Ochieng, 2009), influences the performance of these officers. This study sought to determine the extent to which rewards and recognition influence the job performance levels of the agricultural extension officers in the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which rewards and recognition influence the job performance levels of agricultural extension officers in the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya. The specific objectives included; 1) to establish the extent to which Pay and allowances influence the job performance levels of extension officers in the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya; 2) to determine the extent to which promotion influences the job performance levels of extension officers in the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya; and, 3) to find out the extent to which recognition influences the job performance levels of extension officers in the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya.

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Reward systems can be defined as programs set up by a company to reward employee performance and motivate employees on individual, and /or group levels (Cook and Hunsaker, 2001). There are basically two types of rewards: intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Rollinson (2002) defines extrinsic rewards as those tangible benefits such as pay (salary), fringe benefits, pensions, conditions of work and security that individuals receive in return for their efforts. He goes on to define intrinsic rewards as the psychological rewards that come from the experience of work, or from being part of an organization, for example, having an opportunity to use skills and abilities, having a sense of challenge or achievement or having one’s efforts recognised and appreciated.

The online dictionary (2009 on the other hand defines “recognition” as the acknowledgment of achievement, service, or merit. It goes on to define “reward” as something given or received in return or recompense for service, merit, hardship, etc. “Recognition” in this context has been used to refer to both the acknowledgement by the organization of the efforts put in by the employee as they carry out their day-to-day roles and responsibilities, while “rewards” here has been used to refer to the tangible payments or benefits accorded to the employees in recognition of their performance, also called extrinsic rewards. and Kinicki, (2007) argue that workers need rewards and recognition to motivate them to give their best to the organization and thus help the organization to achieve its goals and objectives.

Deci, Koestner and Ryan (1999) point out that there are two main types of extrinsic rewards that can be adopted by an organization. These are: Completion contingent rewards, where rewards are given to employees for completing given tasks and also in order to motivate them to aim for higher targets and to comply with the organizational goals and norms and performance contingent rewards given for performance, usually based on a normative value, for example doing better than 80% of other workers. Rewards for completion of tasks (like meeting of targets) and recognition for exemplary performance at work, would go a long way in improving extension workers’ performance. Unfortunately, the trend is that no one is recognized or rewarded for exemplary work, but the officers are promptly punished for any misdemeanours.

As in other departments, the Ministry of Agriculture has a reward system, which as demonstrated above is mainly financial and focuses only on two aspects of the individual’s working life-health and education. These rewards can only lead to extrinsic motivation, which leads to the performance of an activity in order to attain some separate outcome (Deci, Ryan and Koestner 2000). As Rollinson (2002) goes on to argue, organizations should strive to excite intrinsic motivation in their employees because it is generally more powerful and can only happen if the conditions the worker experiences allow for them to feel that way.

Motivation is an important issue in any organization because it is involved in energising or initiating human behaviour, directing and channelling that behaviour and sustaining and maintaining it (Steers and Porter1987). This argument is supported by Merchant (1999), who argues that there is a decrease in intrinsic motivation when extrinsic rewards are used to promote behaviour. She goes on to point out that a reduction in intrinsic motivation occurs with monetary rewards, but not with praise. Merchant (1999) goes on to argue that when individual performance is viewed as the outcome, the concern regarding extrinsic rewards decreasing intrinsic motivation is not so clear-cut, although there is no doubt that extrinsic incentives can boost performance. In a practical
sense, decreased intrinsic motivation will be a concern if the extrinsic incentive is withdrawn, as the increased level of performance is unlikely to be sustained.

Rollinson (2002) while considering forms of external incentive such as merit pay schemes, cautions that these systems can fail for a number of reasons, which could range from first, if the pay is not tagged to performance, if the rating is seen to be biased, if the rewards are not viewed as rewarding, if there is more emphasis on satisfaction with pay than performance and if there is a low level of trust and openness about the criteria used in allocating the rewards.

Merit pay schemes may at times encourage poor work practices as individual employees attempt to maximise their personal gains to the detriment of the entire organization (Hickey and Ichter 1997, p. 40). In the Ministry of Agriculture, the scope available for providing extrinsic rewards, such as merit pay, and other direct and indirect compensations is limited because of the availability of funds to support it (Ochieng’, 2009). Importantly though, is the observation that improvements in performance from extrinsic reward systems such as merit pay may well be due to the goal setting and performance planning aspects, rather than the incentives created by the possibility of increased income (Hickey and Ichter 1997, p. 40). It can then be seen that a reward and recognition system focusing on increasing intrinsic motivation would be beneficial for the Ministry of Agriculture. Rewards and recognition that the employee views as positive should improve job satisfaction and performance (Dunford 1992, pp. 84-5). According to Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2000), intrinsic rewards are those positively valued work outcomes that the individual receives directly as a result of task performance. They go on to argue that intrinsic rewards give the employee a feeling of achievement after accomplishing a particularly challenging task. That is why many organizations in cognisance of this use job enrichment, job redesign or restructuring to increase their employees personal worth and make the job more rewarding (Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn, 2000).

One may then be at a loss on the best combination of rewards and recognition to increase intrinsic motivation and enhance individual performance and job satisfaction, as required among extension officers in the Ministry of Agriculture. Brooke, Revell and Green (1998) argue that employees seek the achievement of their career goals and objectives (either through the meeting of expectations, the achievement of financial goals and career goals), responsibility (taking on roles and effectively accomplishing the obligations attached to those roles) and growth (here referring to the personal advancement through the ranks in the organization) as the highest priority for incentives in their work. It can thus be argued that a reward and recognition system that addresses these areas produces the desired outcome. Goal setting (where the employee and the employer negotiate and agree on the targets to be aimed for) can provide a number of these employee rewards as individual employees can negotiate the desired outcomes with management (Dunford 1992: 82). The employee who plays an integral part in the development of these goals is more likely to perceive the outcome as being achievable and to be committed to achieving it (Robbins et al.1998: 213).

While the reward and recognition system in the Ministry of Agriculture has been deficient, its inability to persuade utmost performance among extension officers calls for a strategy to help improve the quality and sufficiency of extension services. In order for an organization to meet its obligation to its employees and society, it must have a relationship with its employees that will fulfil the continually changing needs for both parties (Ali and Ahmed, 2008). This is because, while the organization expects employees to fulfil their obligations to them, the employees expect their organization to provide fair pay (that is, a pay that is commensurate to the type of work or outputs expected from the employees), safe working conditions or providing a work environment which does not endanger the life or safety of the employees and fair and equitable treatment of the employees.

From the above argument, it can be safely concluded that rewards and recognition play a pivotal role in the determination of employees’ productivity levels. While different types of rewards and recognition strategies have been highlighted in the literature review, it is clear that the adoption of one type of reward cannot help the organization to achieve its goals and objectives. There is a need therefore for organizations to combine both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation strategies to ensure the sustainable achievement of goals and objectives. Consequently, with an effective and well thought out rewards and recognition policy, an organization can not only motivate its employees, and thus increase its production, but can also help employees get settled in the organization, giving them the opportunity to clearly determine their career goals and objectives.

**METHODODOLOGY**

This was a descriptive, causal and explanatory case study which sought to determine the effect of rewards and recognition on productivity, and thus had one dependent variable, productivity. The study examined these
variable among extension officers working with the Ministry of Agriculture in Bahari District and collected data through questionnaires and a focussed group discussion for triangulation and consequently came up with recommendations to the Ministry of Agriculture, independent extension service providers and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector in Kenya, for the improvement of performance and general extension service delivery among officers in the agricultural sector. The data collected was analysed using social statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and presented in the form of frequencies and percentages, charts and tables.

RESULTS

This study sought to establish how the rewards and recognition scheme in the Ministry of Agriculture influences the extension officers’ job performance. It sought to get information on the promotion potential, promotion opportunities, salary (pay), benefits, job security, recognition, the relationship between pay and workload and the recruitment procedures. It also sought to establish the respondents pride in their organization and their overall satisfaction with their organization. When asked to state their levels of satisfaction with different aspects of their jobs, the following were the findings.

The first set of questions sought to establish if there were any perceived changes in their earnings as a result of their promotions. When asked about their perceived promotion potential versus changes in salary, 2 (5%) of the total respondents, were somehow satisfied with their potentials, 10 (23%) were satisfied, while 31 (72%) of the total number of respondents were not satisfied at all with the perceived promotion potential. These feelings were corroborated by the focus group discussion held soon after the questionnaires were filled and collected, the majority of respondents indicated that the changes experienced in their income as a result of their promotion was so minor as to defeat the purpose of the whole process. A small number of the respondents felt the changes accompanying their promotion were worth the wait.

The second set of questions sought to establish whether there were promotion opportunities available for the respondents and their regularity. When asked about their promotion potential, that is the dates when they are due for promotion and when it happens, the reactions were different. 4 (9.3%) of the respondents were somewhat satisfied with the way the promotions were carried out in relation to their potentials. 7 (16.3%) of the respondents were satisfied with both their promotion potential and when they came and 32 (74.4%) of the respondents were totally unsatisfied with not only their promotion potentials, but also with the way the promotions were done in the Ministry of Agriculture. During the focus group discussion, there was a general feeling of disillusionment with the whole promotions process, with the majority of the respondents feeling that promotions were not based on merit, but rather on favoritism and the relationship between the extension officer and their supervisor. During the focus group discussion, half of the respondents felt that they had only received their promotions because they had travelled to the headquarters, Kilimo house, (in Nairobi) and had parted with some cash to induce the officers at the headquarters to process their promotions. One of the respondents pointed out that “if you don’t give something to the people at Kilimo house to process your promotion, you will remain in one job-group until you retire!” On the other hand, a few of the respondents felt that they had only been promoted because they were on good terms with their supervisors, while a very small number of the respondents felt that they had received their promotions because they had merited it.

The next set of questions sought to establish the respondents’ comparison of their salaries and their benefits, that is, how they felt the two compared. When asked how they felt about their potential benefits, especially health and life insurance, 3 (7%) of the respondents were somewhat satisfied with the benefits offered by the Ministry of Agriculture. On the other hand, 6 (14%) of the respondents were satisfied, while 34 (79.1%) of the respondents said that they were not satisfied with the benefits offered by the Ministry of Agriculture.

During the focused group discussion, the respondents felt that extension workers in the Ministry of Agriculture compared very poorly with their counter parts working with other extension service providers in as far as benefits were concerned, since their counterparts had benefits like higher salaries, vacation pay and other such benefits. While trying to emphasize the discrepancy between extension officers working for the government and those working for other extension service providers, one respondent stated “we do a donkey’s job and get a beggars pay, while they work like officers and get paid like princes…….this is unfair!”

The next section sought to establish how the extension officers felt about their salary as compared to the overall job security. When asked how they felt about their job security, 9 (20.9%) of the respondents said they felt very satisfied, 15 (34.9%) were somewhat satisfied, another 14 (32.6%) respondents said they were satisfied, while only 5 (11.6%) of the total number of respondents said they were not satisfied. It then means that a majority of the respondents are secure in their jobs.
The study also sought to establish the feelings of the respondents in as far as recognition of their efforts was concerned. When asked what they felt about their chances of promotion, what their supervisors felt about their work accomplishments and whether they were recognized for their accomplishments, 7 (16.3%) of the respondents felt that they received sufficient recognition for their accomplishments, 12 (27.9%) of the respondents felt recognized, while 24 (55.8%) of the respondents felt that they were not recognized for their job accomplishments or outputs. It then means that there is a general feeling among the respondents that they are not being appreciated for their accomplishments.

Next, the study sought to establish the relationship between the officers’ workload and salary and their effect on their overall job performance. When asked how they felt about their salary compared to the workload, 4 (9.3%) of the respondents felt satisfied with the arrangements and expectations, 7 (16.3%) respondents felt satisfied, while 32 (74.4%) of the respondents were not satisfied. This then means that the majority of the respondents find little connection between what they are expected to do and what they are paid. In other words, they feel disgruntled and shortchanged.

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When asked if they were satisfied with the benefit package, 2 (4.7%) of the respondents did not respond to the question, 15 (34.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, 22 (51.2%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 4 (9.3%) of the respondents agreed that the benefits were satisfactory. None of the respondents felt strongly satisfied with the benefits package. Next, the study sought to establish the respondents’ view on the fairness (or lack of it) of the recruitment process in the Ministry of Agriculture. When asked whether the recruitment process and procedures in the ministry of agriculture was transparent, a majority of the respondents 38 (89%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 5 (11%) either strongly agreed or agreed. The respondents were also asked whether they felt recognized for any job they did well, or in other words, whether their excellent performance was appreciated by their supervisors. When asked if they felt appreciated by their supervisors for jobs well done, most of the respondents, 32 (74.4%) felt unappreciated while only 11 (25.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Next, the study sought to establish how the respondents concerning the reward system in the Ministry of Agriculture and its effect on their job performance. As shown in figure 4.8, 40 (93%) of the respondents felt that their efforts are not rewarded. In other words, the general feeling among the respondents is that they are not rewarded sufficiently for their efforts and this has dealt a big blow to their motivation. On the other hand, 3 (7%) of the respondents felt their efforts were sufficiently rewarded.

The study then asked questions to establish the respondents felt was the effect of rewarding efforts on job performance. When asked for their views on the connection between job motivation and rewards, 38 (88.4%) of the respondents felt that rewards motivate workers to give all in their job, while only 5 (11.7%) of the respondents either strongly disagreed or just disagreed with this notion. Next, the study sought to find out the feelings of the respondents on the sufficiency of the different benefits offered by the Ministry of Agriculture, which included lunches, night outs, travelling allowances, annual leave, leave allowances, acting allowance and paid vacations. When asked how they felt in as far as lunch allowances offered by the Ministry of Agriculture were concerned, 24 (55.8%) of the respondents felt that the allowances for lunches were either very insufficient or plain insufficient, 18 (41.9%) of the respondents felt that the allowances were either sufficient or very sufficient, while only 1 (2.3%) of the respondents did not respond to the question.

In the focus group discussion, it emerged that the majority of the respondents were disillusioned with the whole acting scenario. This is because even when though there is a provision for an acting allowance, none of them had ever been paid for acting in another capacity. On the other hand, the majority argued that the amount paid for acting was insufficient to cater for the role requirements. On the other hand, a few of the respondents felt that the amount paid is sufficient because as one of them argued, "...you are being paid an allowance on top of your regular salary and you should be grateful for it".

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the analysis, most of the respondents felt that both rewards and recognition were important to them. There was however a general dissatisfaction among the respondents with the current compensation practices in the Ministry of Agriculture, with most of the respondents feeling that their salaries did not match the changes and demands of the unpredictable economy. On the other hand, there was a general feeling among the respondents that their benefits compares poorly with those offered by other service providers, and is not sufficient to motivate them to give their best in their daily duties and responsibilities. There was also a general feeling of there being inequity in the general recruitment process, job promotions and the general rewarding of extension.
officers. During the focussed group discussion, it emerged that this trend had worked to lower the morale of extension officers in their daily operations. Consequently, extension workers in the Ministry of Agriculture are not motivated and this could be one of the explanations for the low levels of productivity.

On the other hand, many of the extension officers tied recognition for work done to motivation and felt that the lack of recognition had dealt a big blow to their general motivation in their day-to-day work and greatly affected their productivity. It then means that many officers in the Ministry of Agriculture would leave the organisation if they were to find an employer offering better rewards and recognition. Most of the respondents interviewed felt that rewards were important to them. This agrees with Belcourt and Snell’s (2005) argument that employees want a compensation system that they see as being fair and adequate for their skills. They go on to point out that pay is a major consideration in human resource management because it provides employees with a tangible reward for their services, as well as a source of recognition and livelihood. They finish by opining that pay constitutes a quantitative measure of an employee’s relative worth. It can thus be safely argued that employee compensation includes all forms of pay and rewards received by employees for the performance of their jobs.

From the findings, most of the employees felt that both staff rewards and recognition was important to them. It however emerged that the respondents were generally dissatisfied with the current compensation levels in the Ministry of Agriculture and felt that the salary levels were first, not commensurate with the job demands and secondly, not considerate of the economic hardships occasioned by the changing economic times. It was clear that the respondents felt that the salary levels were way below the current market rates and it thus made sense when the officers disagreed with the proposal that their organisation’s (Ministry of Agriculture) levels of compensation compared well with other organisations. This means that in the Ministry of Agriculture, there is no external equity, which according to Dessler (2008) occurs when an employer pays wages that correspond to those prevailing in the external labour market. Dessler (2008) points out that in developing a pay structure policy, a company must also makes decisions about pay ranges, the range of wages allowed by a specific wage classifications and the amount of overlap between the ranges.

During the focus group discussion, there emerged a general feeling that the salaries currently being offered by the Ministry of Agriculture do not cushion the officers from the ever changing costs of basic necessities. This has worked to leave them frustrated by their inability to afford even the most basic necessities, in spite of having the necessary academic qualifications and job experience. This is in sharp contrast to Lawler and Worley (2006), who argues that organisations need to reward their staff, not only for the jobs they do, but also for their skills and knowledge. They go on to point out that, in most organisations, the employees’ tasks keep on changing, making it more sensible to pay someone according to their market value rather than for the task they are currently performing. It is important to note here that the main goal of a compensation system is fairness or perceived equity on the part of the employees. Dessler (2008) points out that, individuals who believe that their pay is too little relative to what others earn or what they think they should earn may become dissatisfied and seek for employment elsewhere. This is an important consideration especially in an organisation like the Ministry of Agriculture, which would wish to retain its workforce.

Also, the study revealed that most of the agents believed that there was no equity in promotions this was perceived to cause frustrations among the employees because it meant that no matter how hard an officer worked, it was not recognized and never contributed to their promotions in any way. This frustration had the effect of lowering their levels of satisfaction.

On the issue of recognition, most of the respondents were dissatisfied with the recognition they received from their immediate supervisors. According to Klubnik (1995), getting employees to do their best is a function of what Hertzberg calls “motivators”. Motivators include praise and recognition, challenging work, growth and development opportunities. He goes on to point out that employers can increase the level of job satisfaction in their employers by not only paying them fairly but also by treating superbly. One of the key contributing factors to the extension officers’ dissatisfaction was identified to be the tendency of the supervisors (both at the provincial, district and divisional levels) to be very fast at identifying officers’ failures and dwelling on them while at the same time totally ignoring anything good the employees did. In the group discussions, it emerged that if the supervisors praised their employees or subordinates and chose to use positive reinforcement instead of dwelling on their shortcomings and failures, then it would go a long a way in enhancing the officers’ job satisfaction.

In conclusion, the study established that the extension officers in the ministry of Agriculture are not sufficiently rewarded and recognised for their efforts, which has dealt a big blow to their motivation. The Ministry of Agriculture needs to thus take the necessary measures to change the trends. It is important to note here that
having an effective rewards and recognition program in place tells employees that their contributions are important and that their efforts are appreciated. It also leads to job satisfaction which works to instil a positive attitude in the employees, which in turn leads to the employees going the extra mile to serve their employer and clients better.

This study recommends that the benefits and salaries paid to extension officers in the Ministry of Agriculture be reviewed to cushion them against the hard economic times occasioned by the global economic challenges currently being experienced world wide. The Ministry of Agriculture should also consider introducing paid vacations for its extension officers as a way of motivating them to give their best in their day to day extension services.

The Ministry of Agriculture should also come up with a policy to reward and recognise hard working employees to make sure that extension officers feel appreciated for their efforts. It should also ensure equity in the rewards and recognition process. There should also be a strategy to ensure that the salary and benefits paid to the officers' match the role requirements and the officers' ability to perform. Lastly, the extension officers in charge of supervision should be trained on human relations, communication skills and general management to ensure that they have the skills needed to manage an effective work force.

REFERENCES