

# Psychological Factors Affecting Work Motivation of Development Agents: The Case of Wolaita Zone, Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples Regional State, Ethiopia

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## Abstract

Motivation is one of the most key theories in human resource management. It explain what organizations can do to encourage people to apply their efforts and abilities in ways that will go forward to the achievement of the organization's goals as well as satisfying their own needs. This study was designed to identify the level and the most significant psychological factors that affect work motivation of Development Agents (DAs). For this study, two woredas with a total sample size of 150 DAs were included as the sample respondents. Respondents were selected in a simple random sampling technique following probability proportional sampling procedures. A structured survey questionnaire, focus group discussion and key informant interview were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. In analyzing the Primary and secondary data type, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The ordinal logistic regression model was employed to determine the most significant variables affecting DAs motivation to work. The study found that 55.3% of DAs had medium level of work motivation, followed by 33.3% and 11.3% low and high level of work motivation, respectively. The overall mean of motivational score was 2.58 on a 1 to 5 point likert type scale. This indicates that work motivation level of DAs was almost in medium level and need efforts to improve it.

**Keywords:** psychological factors, Development Agents, Level of Work motivation, Work motivation , and ordinal logistic regression model

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social factors include general factors at the level of human society concerned with social structure and social processes that impinge on the individual. Psychological factors include individual-level processes and meanings that influence mental states. Sometimes, these words are combined as "psychosocial." This is shorthand term for the combination of psychological and social, but it also implies that the effect of social processes is sometimes mediated through psychological understanding (Stansfeld & Rasul, 2007).

Motivation is relatively different from other concepts like as instinct, drives and reaction of policy but at some extent it is also related with these all concepts. People must be motivated to achieve certain goal or ambitions in life whether it may personal or business but it is always related with drives means eager to get something by anyway. In addition, motivation must be co-related with the ambitions. People are only motivated after setting up certain goals. Except natural behavior, motivation should only be on the base of emotional feelings. Motivation may come and draw non understandable reactions.

According to Nelson and Quick (2003), motivation is the process of arousing and sustaining goal-directed behavior. Luthans (1998) sees it as the process that arouses, energizes, directs, and sustains behavior and performance, while Pinder (1998) defines work motivation as the set of internal and external forces that initiate work-related behavior, and determine its form, direction, intensity and duration.

Content theories explain why people are motivated in different ways and in different work setting. In this category belongs 'need theories' (Maslow, Alderfer and McClelland), job content theory (Herzberg, and Hackman and Oldham). The need theories maintain that an individual is motivated to do something if he/she experiences a specific need that may be fulfilled directly or indirectly by performing that action. However, the job content theories maintain that only aspects related to job content satisfy and motivate people to work. Process theories on the other hand, describe and analyze how behavior will be energized, directed, sustained, and stopped by factors primarily external to the person. Both categories have important implications for managers, who by the nature of their jobs are involved with the motivational process (Gibson *et al.*, 2000).

In order to make employees motivated and committed to their jobs in agricultural and rural development activities, there is a need for strong and effective motivation at the grass root level, sphere-head workers in the front-line that are agricultural extension agents (Ayeni and Popoola, 2007).

They are the major implementers of the policies and strategies at the proximity for the farmers above all of the actors. Employees work harder and perform better if motivated with their jobs (Beder, 1990; Watanabe, 1991). In the same way, the new awaking of humanism and humanization all over the world has enlarged the scope of applying principles of human resource management in organization (Pareek, U., 1993). This study hypothesized.

- H1: There is a significant relationship between Psychological factors and work motivation.  
 H2: There is a significant relationship between demographic variables and work motivation

## 2. METHODOLOGY

There are 12 Woredas and three urban administrative towns in Wolaita Zone. The total sample population of 262 DAs was taken from the two woredas. A simplified formula suggested by Yamane (1967) was used to calculate a sample size of 150. Both quantitative and qualitative data type were collected from primary and secondary sources using a simple random sampling technique. The survey was carried out on January, 2014.

The variables were measured using a five point Likert-type scale as suggested by Thurstone (1976) except, variables; such as sex, marital status and family background. To measure work motivation variables the scale used were 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree. The scoring was given in ascending order from 1 to 5 for positive responses, and the scoring patterns were reversed for negative items.

To analyze the data, Descriptive statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, percentage, frequency of occurrence, Chi-square, Spearman' rho Correlation and ordered logit regression analysis were used.

DAs were categorized as low, medium, and highly motivated. DAs work motivation categories were done based on their deviation from the actual mean score distribution (Actual mean  $\pm$  Standard deviation) Mwangi and McCaslin (1995).

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Work Motivation Level of DAs

**Table 5.** The Level of work motivation among DAs in the study area

No	Work motivation category	Score	Frequency	Percentage	Overall	
					mean	SD
1.	Low motivated	9-12	50	33.3	2.58	0.75
2.	Medium motivated	13-22	83	55.3		
3.	Highly motivated	23-33	17	11.3		
Total			150	100		

Source: Own computation from survey data, 2014.

As indicated in Table 1, the score of work motivation ranges from 9 to 33. The actual mean score of work motivation is 16.87 with the standard deviation (SD) of 4.79 with the minimum and the maximum scores of 9 and 33. The overall mean of motivational score was 2.58 on a scale of 1 to 5. This indicates that almost half of the work motivation level of DAs was medium and need efforts to improve the condition. The result agrees with the study conducted by Mwangi and McCaslin (1995) that the agent's motivational level was above the midpoint (2.5), on the positive side of the scale of 1 to 5.

The data obtained categorized DAs into low, medium and high work motivation levels. The categorization of the DAs into these levels reflects the base for their deviations from the actual mean score distribution (that is, Actual mean  $\pm$  Standard deviation =16.87 $\pm$ 4.79) which was used by Zelalem (2011), Tesfaye (2012) and Debebe (2013). The result of this study shows that 33.3% (n=50), 55.3% (n=83) and 11.3% (n=17) of DAs were low, medium and highly motivated, respectively.

In addition to the survey among the DAs using structured questionnaire, FGDs and informal discussions with DAs and supervisors were conducted regarding the work motivation of DAs in the study area. The qualitative information obtained confirmed that lower salary, lack of further education and training, asked to work long and irregular hours that include nights and weekends without appropriate incentive mechanism, less recognition from supervisors and farming community for the good work done, challenging working condition, large workloads, irrelevant duties and responsibilities to the profession, poor infrastructural facilities and transportation have influenced the job dissatisfaction, low work motivation and more frequent turnover of DAs.

### 3.2. Descriptions of Personal Factors and Work Motivation

**Sex:** According to the result, 74.7% of the respondents them were male and only 25.3% were female. The result of the statistical analysis indicated that there was no significant relationship between work motivation and the sex of the respondent. Though limited number of female extension workers was one of the problems observed in the extension service, the work motivation is similar between male and female in this study. The empirical studies done by Belaynesh, (2008), yohanes (2009) and other studies also revealed that agricultural extension services in the country are male-dominated from the local to the national level. This has an implication to address the needs and problems of women farmers because front-line male extension workers tend to work with male farmers and sometimes with female household heads. Despite the social and cultural factors that reduced female extension workers in their work, FGD and key informants information confirmed that the nature of work by itself needs both physiologically and mentally fit field workers.

**Marital status:** It was hypothesized that there is a difference in work motivation between married and unmarried respondents in favor of unmarried DAs. The result of the chi-square test showed that there was no relationship existed between marital status and work motivation level of the DAs even though majority of the respondents was found unmarried 52% and married 48%. However, other study has shown a relationship between marital status and work motivation, indicating that married agents have more motivation than unmarried agents (Fetsch and Kennington, 1997).

**Family Background (rural/urban):** The rural background of DAs was hypothesized to have a positive relationship with the work motivation of DAs. Other Study conducted has shown the association between work motivation and agents family back ground, indicating that the rural back ground agents are more motivated than agents with urban back ground (Tefaye, 2012). In the study area, the majority of the respondents have a rural background 66.7% and 33.3% have urban background. However, the result from the chi-square test showed that there is no significant relationship between DAs family background and work motivation.

**Age:** It was hypothesized that older agents were assumed to have less work motivation than younger DAs. The result from Chi-square test indicated that age was not related to work motivation of the DAs As it can be seen from the table 3, a considerable percentage of the respondents, 37.3% were between 25 and 28 years of age. Only 4.7% of respondents fell in the age category of 37 years and above. The mean age of the extension agents was 30 years, the oldest being 45 and the youngest 21 years old. Almost 95% of the respondents were less than 37 years old. Even though the statistical analysis did not show significances, similar studies have done on the relationship between age and work motivation, indicating that the elder workers are more motivated in their work than younger workers (Paynter, 2004). In contrast to this result, Zelalem (2011) and Tesfaye (2012) obtained that older agents have less work motivation than the younger DA.

#### **Distance From home**

It was hypothesized that the long distance from their homes to their workplace affects the work motivation of DAs negatively. The result from chi-square test confirmed that there is significant relationship at less than 5% level between DAs work motivation and the work location. As the mean values reflected, 46.7% of respondents gave the neutral response .This implies that the distance from home place is not much encouraging or discouraging factors as far as the work motivation is concerned. This finding is similar to a study by Zelalem (2011) and Tesfaye (2012) in that the relationship between distance of workplace and work motivation was negatively related to each other.

**Achievement motivation:** one of the important needs exist to some level in all human beings is the need to attain excellence and higher level of performance. People in whom the need for achievement is strong seek difficult work and improve their task performance. They are future oriented, aspire for higher goals and continue to the task chosen. They are task oriented and prefer to work on tasks that are challenging and on which their performance can be evaluated in some way McClelland (1961). The relationship of achievement on work motivation of DAs was analyzed using cross tabulation, chi-square and spearman's correlation. The result indicates that a significant number, 72.6% of DAs were motivated by the achievement in their work, whereas 22 % of DAs were not motivated by the achievements in their work. The statistical result also indicates that there is a positive association among achievement motivation with the work motivation at 1% significant level. From the results thus achievement motivation is the determinant factors DAs motivation in their work. In line with this, a study by Herzberg (1968) pointed out that to improve motivation and thereby increase staff performance, attention should be given to motivating factors by increasing the individual's sense of achievement and to demonstrate recognition of that achievement. Furthermore, McClelland's (1975) motivation theory pointed out that those employees who have a high achievement motivation shows a strong need for feed back to achievement and progress in their work. For such employees achievement is more important for their motivation.

**Recognition:** In this study, effective recognition system of extension organizations comprises both formal recognition (such as award, sermons and bonus schemes) and informal recognition (such as words of appreciation, giving of gifts and awards outside any formal recognition system based on perception of DAs). Recognition generally costs nothing and is immensely motivating, yet it is underutilized (Van Wart *et al.*, 2008). Recognition concern to both informal and formal intangible incentives by showing appreciation and provides praise. The output of the analysis showed that, 42.7% of the DAs were discouraged by the existing recognition system in their organization while 22.7% were highly discouraging. 18.7% and 9.3% were motivated and highly motivated scores of respondents respectively. The rest 6.7% fell in the moderate motivation category. The correlation result shows the existence of positive association between recognition and work motivation of DAs ( $\rho = +.354$ ). This result support the studies undertaken by Yohannes (2009), Zelalem (2011) and Tesfaye (2012) in their studies regarding factors influencing work motivation of DAs in SNNPR, Benishangul Gumuz Regional State and Bule Hora District, Borana Zone respectively. These studies confirmed that there is association between work motivation of DAs and the recognition system of extension organizations. In line with this Maren (2002) states "keep in mind that a simple 'thank you' still goes a long way with employees. Your employees will be more motivated to work hard if they know you recognize and appreciate their contribution". We can easily understand from this that recognition is the indispensable factors

which influence work motivation of DAs. Additionally, Tyilan (2005) noted that many employees report that what really matters to them is personal attention and public recognition. The study finally concluded from the respondent's formal and informal analysis that attention and recognition for their achievements they receive from their organization management, colleagues and the farming community are more likely to motivate them to their work.

### Quality of work life

According to the study, majority of the respondents 65.3% expressed that they are discouraged by quality of work. The result from the analysis of spearman's correlation confirmed that there is association between the quality of work life and work motivation levels of DAs at 10% significant level. This indicates that there was less quality of work life in extension organization of the study area. This finding is similar to a study by Tesfaye (2012). In contrast, Zelalem (2011) found that there was better quality of work life in an agricultural extension organization.

### 3.3. Econometric Results of Ordered Logit Model

Table 6. The summary of maximum likelihood estimation of ordered logit model

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err.	Z	P> z	Marginal effect		
					Low	Medium	High
Marital Status	1.1300	.4638	2.4400	.015**	-.1754	.1562	.0192
Achievement Motivation	.3879	.1981	1.9600	.050**	-.0602	.0536	.0066
Recognition	.6168	.2092	2.9500	.003***	-.0957	.0853	.0105
Quality of work life	.0568	.1787	.3200	.7500	-.0088	.0079	.0010

Maximum likelihood estimate:

Log likelihood = -78.517558      Number of obs = 150

LR chi2 (7) = 125.10      Prob. > chi2 = 0.0000      Pseudo R2 = 0.4434

Note: \*\*\*, \*\*and\* are significant at 1%, 5% and 10% probability level respectively.

Source: Own computation of model output from survey data, 2014.

The analysis result obtained from ordered logit model in the table the associated Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> value was small; it implies the rejection of the null hypothesis that all the coefficients in the model are equal to zero. Therefore, in line with Hensher *et al.* (2005) criterion for best fit model (values of Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> between 0.2 and 0.4 are considered to be extremely good fits), the overall fit of the ordered logit model (0.4434) was found to be good.

Moreover, from the result, chi-square statistics indicated that the parameters included in the model were significantly different from zero at 1% level of significance.

#### 3.4.1. Determinants of DAs Work Motivation (Model Output)

**Marital status (MARS):** in the study, it was hypothesized that unmarried DAs have a positive relationship with work motivation. The model result also shows that unmarried DAs were positively related with work motivation than married counter parts at 5% level of significance. The marginal effect result indicated that other things remain constant, a unit increase in unmarried DAs, the work motivation at low category level decreased by .175 whereas for medium and high category of motivation increased by .156 and .0192 respectively.

**Perceived workplace policy environment (PPE):** Policy and Strategy environment of extension organization in the study area was found to have positive and significant impact on work motivation of DAs at 5% significant level. Barnett and Louderback (1971) noted that dissatisfaction often occurs when the goals and policies of the organization are not clearly defined and understood. The marginal effect on the availability of favorable and clearly defined policies in extension organizations implies that, other things being constant, an increase of a unit of favorable workplace policy environment, the probability of work motivation of low category decreases by .0727 whereas, the probability of work motivation for medium and high work motivation category increases by about .0648 and .0079 respectively.

**Performance Appraisal System (PPAS):** Performance Appraisal System was one of the important factors which affect work motivation of the DAs. The model output revealed that the Performance Appraisal System applied to the organization was significant and positive impact on work motivation of DAs at less than 5% level of significance. The result of the model also states that All other things being held constant, in a change in Performance Appraisal System, work motivation of low work motivation category reduces by about 8.56, on the other hand, for medium and high work motivation category increases by about .0762 and .0094 respectively. The formal and informal discussion done among respondents confirmed that the organizational goal/ objective based staff evaluation systems in a monthly, quarterly, half-a-year and annual basis were not held in fair manner. And, the agents also could not get the feed-back on what they primarily assigned to perform. The unfair performance appraisal system used by the extension organization in the study area discouraged and reduced the efforts of hard and self-motivated DAs.

#### 4. Conclusion

According to the study result, from the total respondents (n=150) included in the sample, the highest percent (55.3%) of them were in the middle category of motivational level. About 33.3% of the respondents were low motivated, and only 11.3% respondents were found being highly motivated. The overall mean of motivational score was 2.58 on a scale of 1 to 5 (“strongly disagree–strongly agree”). This indicates that almost half of the work motivation level of DAs was medium and need efforts to improve the condition. Variables, such as Sex, marital status, family background and age of respondents were not significantly related with work motivation of DAs. All other factors were significant at different levels of significances. For the success of organizations, employees who are interested and eager towards achieving organizational goals and having a strong desire to accomplish her/his duty in the organization are very important. To make employees able to do so and generate such motivation and organizational obligation, the knowledge about what institutional factors motivate and demotivate them is essential.

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