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ANALYSIS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING PRACTICES AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION AGENTS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Gender disparity within agricultural extension systems continues to undermine institutional equity and workforce satisfaction, particularly in South-South Nigeria. This study analyzed gender mainstreaming practices and job satisfaction among agricultural extension agents in South-South Nigeria. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 280 agricultural extension agents from public Agricultural Development Programmes across Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Rivers States. Data were collected using structured questionnaire and analyzed with descriptive statistics. Results showed a moderate overall level of gender mainstreaming ($\bar{x}$= 3.42), with high scores for equal participation ($\bar{x}$=3.92), gender-integrated training ($\bar{x}$=3.83) and female leadership ($\bar{x}$=3.71), but only moderate implementation of gender budgeting ($\bar{x}$=3.25), data collection ($\bar{x}$=2.94) and monitoring ($\bar{x}$= 3.12). Job satisfaction was also moderate ($\bar{x}$=3.36), with females scoring higher (3.46 vs. 3.29, p = *0.033). The study concludes that institutionalized gender practices enhance satisfaction and recommends enhancing gender data and monitoring systems, improving gender-responsive budgeting, sustaining inclusive training and leadership, revising compensation, and adopting gender-sensitive motivation strategies to boost equity and staff satisfaction.*

Keywords: Gender, mainstreaming, agricultural extension agents, Job satisfaction.

1.0 Introduction

In contemporary agricultural systems, the role of agricultural extension services in fostering innovation, enhancing productivity and promoting inclusive rural development cannot be overemphasized. However, the functionality and impact of these services are heavily influenced by internal institutional dynamics, including gender mainstreaming practices and the job satisfaction of extension agents. Gender mainstreaming, as defined by global development standards, involves the deliberate and

systematic incorporation of gender perspectives in all areas of policy, program and organizational practices to promote equality and empower both men and women (Lwamba *et al*., 2022). In the context of agricultural development, this means addressing the historically entrenched gender disparities that limit women's participation and benefits from agricultural innovation, knowledge dissemination and decision-making processes (Adam and Njogu, 2023; Bryan *et al*., 2024).

Despite growing awareness of gender inequalities in agricultural systems, gender biases persist in the recruitment, training, promotion and role allocation within agricultural extension services. These organizational practices influence not only the inclusiveness and effectiveness of extension delivery but also shape the work environment and satisfaction levels of extension agents themselves (Hing *et al*., 2023). Research has shown that job satisfaction among agricultural extension personnel is a critical determinant of their motivation, performance and retention (Kassa, 2016). A satisfied extension workforce is more likely to be innovative, committed to their roles and responsive to farmers' needs, which ultimately enhances agricultural outcomes (Arowosegbe *et al*., 2024; He *et al*., 2025).

Job satisfaction is a central component of workforce effectiveness and organizational performance. In agricultural extension systems, job satisfaction has been linked to factors such as work environment, recognition, career advancement, leadership inclusion, and fair treatment (Kassa, 2016; Biswas et al., 2021). According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, both intrinsic motivators (e.g., achievement, recognition) and extrinsic hygiene factors (e.g., salary, work conditions) affect employees satisfaction. Female extension agents, in particular, may experience different levels of job satisfaction due to gendered experiences in the workplace (Etim et al., 2025; Aljumah, 2023). However, the intersection between gender mainstreaming and job satisfaction is underexplored, especially in the Nigerian extension context. Understanding this relationship is crucial for developing inclusive and sustainable extension services.

In South-South Nigeria, the issue of gender disparity in agricultural extension institutions remains pronounced. The existing structures have been criticized for

maintaining gendered patterns in job assignments, promotion opportunities and leadership representation, often to the disadvantage of female extension agents (Etim *et al*., 2025). While efforts to mainstream gender have been initiated in some quarters, these practices are not uniformly implemented or adequately evaluated for their effectiveness. Consequently, experiences of extension agents, particularly regarding job satisfaction, remain varied and insufficiently understood.

Furthermore, the relationship between gender mainstreaming practices and job satisfaction among extension agents in the region is underexplored in empirical literature. Studies such as Etim *et al*. (2025) have highlighted motivational disparities between male and female extension agents. Kassa (2016) examined general determinants of job satisfaction among extension workers. Additionally, studies by Chiara *et al*. (2024) and Bryan *et al*. (2024) emphasizes the critical role of gender inclusion in sustainable development, yet these insights are often not translated into institutional assessments within agricultural extension frameworks in Nigeria. There is limited research specifically linking gender-inclusive organizational practices to job satisfaction outcomes.

This gap is problematic because without targeted inquiry into how gender mainstreaming practices influence employee satisfaction, institutions may fail to enact reforms that enhance workforce morale and performance. If left unaddressed, the persistence of gender-insensitive organizational environments may not only hinder the professional development of female extension agents but also reduce the overall effectiveness of agricultural extension systems in South-South Nigeria. Thus, a thorough investigation into this linkage is essential for driving more equitable and productive extension service delivery in the region.

2.0 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study was to analyse gender main streaming practices and job satisfaction among agricultural extension agents in South-South, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

i. identify the gender mainstreaming practices implemented in agricultural extension institutions in South-South Nigeria.

ii. measure the level of job satisfaction among agricultural extension agents in the study area.

3.0 Methodology

The study was conducted in the South-South, Nigeria. An area known for its rich agricultural potential, favourable climate and active agricultural institutions. The population included all agricultural extension agents working in public Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) within three States in the South-South zone. According to NAERLS/FMAFS (2024), the total number of public extension agents in the region was 642, distributed as follows: Akwa Ibom (135), Bayelsa (94), Cross River (132), Delta (152), Edo (54), and Rivers (75). A multistage sampling method was used: In the first stage, three States, Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Rivers, were purposively selected from the six States in the South-South zone due to their relative stability, accessibility and active extension programs. In the second stage, 70% of extension agents from each selected state were randomly drawn, resulting in 95 respondents from Akwa Ibom, 92 from Cross River, and 53 from Rivers, giving a total sample size of 240. Of these, 160 were male and 80 were female agricultural extension agents. The gender of the respondents was identified using official records from the respective State Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) and was further verified during field visits and data collection. Selection within each state was stratified by gender to ensure adequate and proportionate representation of both male and female extension agents, based on their distribution in the ADP workforce.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into three sections. Section A captured the demographic characteristics of respondents. Section B assessed gender mainstreaming practices using eight items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Respondents' scores on these items were summed and averaged to compute composite mean scores for each gender mainstreaming practice, which were then interpreted as Low (1.00–2.49), Moderate

(2.50–3.49), or High (3.50–5.00).

Section C measured job satisfaction (dependent variable, Y) using the 20-item Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) short form, which assessed intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction components. Each item was also rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied). Respondents' scores were summed and averaged to obtain an overall job satisfaction score. The scores were interpreted using the same thresholds: Low (1.00–2.49), Moderate (2.50–3.49), and High (3.50–5.00).

The instrument was pre-tested on 30 non-sampled extension agents in Delta State for clarity and relevance. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages) summarized respondents' characteristics and responses on gender mainstreaming and job satisfaction. An independent samples t-test compared job satisfaction between male and female agents.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Gender Mainstreaming Practices Implemented in Agricultural Extension Institutions in South-South, Nigeria

Table 1 shows a moderate level of gender mainstreaming among agricultural extension institutions in South-South, Nigeria, with a mean score of 3.42. Among the eight indicators assessed, equal participation policies recorded the highest mean

Gender Mainstreaming Practice	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Remarks
Institutional policies promote equal participation of men and women in extension activities	3.92	0.87	High
Gender-sensitive budgeting is practiced	3.25	0.94	Moderate
Female staff are represented in leadership/decision-making positions	3.71	0.81	High
Gender issues are integrated into training and capacity-building programs	3.83	0.79	High
Gender focal persons or units exist and are active	3.10	1.01	Moderate
Gender-disaggregated data is routinely collected and used	2.94	1.07	Moderate
Regular monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming efforts is conducted	3.12	0.88	Moderate
Gender equity is considered in staff recruitment and promotions	3.45	0.85	Moderate
Overall Mean Score	3.42	0.90	Moderate

Note: Scale = 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Interpretation: 1.00–2.49 = Low, 2.50–3.49 = Moderate, 3.50–5.00 = High.

4.2 Level of Job Satisfaction among Agricultural Extension Agents

Table 2 shows that the overall job satisfaction was moderate ($\bar{x}$= 3.36). Based on individual attributes; highest satisfaction with moral values ($\bar{x}$= 3.44), recognition ($\bar{x}$= 3.44), ability utilization ($\bar{x}$= 3.42), and job security ($\bar{x}$= 3.41). These indicate that respondents were more satisfied with aspects of their jobs that relate to ethical alignment, appreciation, effective use of skills, and employment stability.

On the other hand, the lowest rating was observed for compensation ($\bar{x}$= 2.72), suggesting general dissatisfaction with financial rewards. Similarly, company policies and practices also received a relatively low score ($\bar{x}$= 2.95), which may reflect concerns about institutional structures and bureaucratic efficiency.

These findings suggest that, while the agents find moral fulfillment and intrinsic rewards in their roles, extrinsic motivators like pay and administrative structures are less satisfactory. This imbalance between intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction underscores the need for policy attention to financial and organizational incentives.

This finding aligns with the work of Mafini and Dlodlo (2014) that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors jointly contribute to job satisfaction, but intrinsic rewards such as recognition and moral alignment often carry more motivational weight in public organizations, as reflected in the current study. Similarly, Manzoor *et al*. (2021) emphasized the mediating role of intrinsic motivation, such as meaningful work and recognition, in boosting job satisfaction and performance, supporting the higher scores observed in those domains. The relatively low satisfaction with compensation concurs with the results of Ismail and Blaique (2014) who noted that inadequate extrinsic rewards in developing countries often depress overall job satisfaction, particularly in public service roles.

The consistency of moderate satisfaction across most domains may also be interpreted through the lens of Herzberg's two-factor theory, as applied by Alrawahi *et al*. (2020) which distinguishes between hygiene factors (e.g., salary, policies) and motivators (e.g., recognition, responsibility). The agents' dissatisfaction with compensation contrasts

sharply with their higher satisfaction with moral values and recognition, suggesting that hygiene factors remain suboptimal, motivators are performing better in fostering job contentment. This also echoes the observations of Slavkovic *et al*. (2023) that intrinsic motivation significantly elevates job satisfaction in service-oriented public institutions despite limitations in extrinsic incentives.

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Job Satisfaction among Agricultural Extension Agents (n = 280)

Attributes of Job Satisfaction	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Remarks
Ability utilization (using one's skills and abilities)	3.42	0.71	Moderate
Achievement (sense of accomplishment from work)	3.38	0.77	Moderate
Activity (being busy all the time)	3.25	0.83	Moderate
Authority (opportunity to tell others what to do)	3.27	0.89	Moderate
Company policies and practices	2.95	0.91	Moderate
Compensation	2.72	1.00	Moderate
Co-workers (enjoying working with others)	3.39	0.68	Moderate
Creativity (opportunity to try one's own methods)	3.33	0.76	Moderate
Independence	3.28	0.81	Moderate
Moral values (doing things not against one's conscience)	3.44	0.64	Moderate
Recognition	3.44	0.87	Moderate
Responsibility	3.36	0.79	Moderate
Security (steady employment)	3.41	0.82	Moderate
Social service (doing things for others)	3.39	0.70	Moderate
Social status (being "somebody" in the community)	3.21	0.84	Moderate
Supervision – Human relations	3.29	0.79	Moderate
Supervision – Technical	3.36	0.80	Moderate
Variety (doing different things)	3.30	0.82	Moderate
Overall Mean Score	3.36	0.81	Moderate

Note: Scale = 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied).
Interpretation: 1.00–2.49 = Low; 2.50–3.49 = Moderate; 3.50–5.00 = High.

Table 3 reveals that female agricultural extension agents reported a higher mean job satisfaction score (x = 3.46) compared to their male counterparts (x = 3.29), and the difference was statistically significant (t = –2.15, p = 0.033). This suggests that gender

plays a role in how job satisfaction is perceived and experienced among extension agents in the region. The higher satisfaction reported by female agents may be linked to intrinsic aspects of the job such as moral values, recognition, and a sense of service, which often resonate more with women in public service roles. Additionally, the presence of gender-sensitive practices and a growing awareness of inclusion may contribute positively to how female agents assess their work environment.

This observed gender-based difference aligns with the findings of Etim *et al*. (2025) who reported significant motivational differences between male and female extension agents, with women generally deriving greater satisfaction from job-related accomplishments and social value. This trend could be attributed to heightened gender sensitivity or the perceived progressiveness of institutional inclusion efforts, which may make female agents more appreciative of non-material aspects of their roles. The results also correlate with of Aljumah (2023) who identified gender as a mediating variable influencing how motivational factors impact satisfaction levels, especially under transactional leadership frameworks typical of public service institutions.

Table 3: Comparison of Overall Job Satisfaction by Gender (n = 280)

Gender	n	Mean Job Satisfaction Score	SD	t-value	p-value
Male	160	3.29	0.82	–2.15	0.033
Female	120	3.46	0.77		

Note: Independent samples t-test used. $p < 0.05$ indicates statistically significant difference.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study assessed gender mainstreaming practices and job satisfaction among agricultural extension agents in South-South Nigeria. The results indicated a moderate level of gender mainstreaming, with higher implementation in equal participation policies, integration of gender issues in training programs, and female leadership representation. However, lower scores were recorded in gender-sensitive budgeting,

gender-disaggregated data collection, and active monitoring and evaluation, pointing to institutional gaps in systematic gender integration.

Similarly, overall job satisfaction was moderate, with extension agents expressing greater satisfaction with intrinsic job attributes such as moral values, recognition, and ability utilization. In contrast, compensation and institutional policies received lower ratings, indicating dissatisfaction with extrinsic job conditions. Notably, female agents reported significantly higher job satisfaction than their male counterparts, suggesting that gender influences how job roles are experienced.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Improve institutional mechanisms for gender-disaggregated data and monitoring: Since the routine collection and use of gender-disaggregated data and monitoring of gender practices were among the lowest-rated indicators, extension institutions should strengthen their data systems and establish clear monitoring frameworks to track gender outcomes and ensure accountability.
2. Strengthen gender-sensitive budgeting processes: Given the moderate rating for gender-sensitive budgeting, extension agencies should build capacity for inclusive budgeting practices that explicitly allocate resources for gender equity initiatives.
3. Maintain and deepen gender-inclusive training and leadership initiatives: The high ratings for gender integration in training and female leadership representation suggest areas of good practice. These efforts should be sustained and scaled to consolidate institutional gender equity gains.
4. Address low satisfaction with compensation and policies: As compensation received the lowest satisfaction score, extension institutions should revisit their remuneration packages and revise relevant organizational policies to boost motivation and retention.
5. Design gender-responsive motivation strategies: Given the significantly higher

job satisfaction among female agents, institutions should explore gender-responsive management practices that leverage the motivational drivers unique to each gender group to enhance productivity and morale.

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