AGRISOCIONOMICS
Jurnal Sosial Ekonomi dan Kebijakan Pertanian
ISSN 2580-0566; E-ISSN 2621-9778
http://ejournal2.undip.ac.id/index.php/agrisocionomics
Vol 8 (1): 231-241, March 2024

FACTORS INFLUENCING WORKING MOTIVATION OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION AGENTS IN CENTRAL JAVA PROVINCE

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Submitted 19 May 2023; Approved 12 December 2023

ABSTRACT

Productivity of rice in Pekalongan and Jepara regencies is the lowest in the Pantura region of Central Java province. One of the problems is that the number of extension workers is still insufficient and is not balanced with the area of agricultural areas in the district. The existence of agricultural instructors has a positive impact on farmer behavior, including knowledge, attitudes and skills. The more advanced farmers' behavior will have the impact of increasing the productivity of their farming This indicates that the program of one Agricultural Extension Agent for one village has not been fulfilled. This research was conducted to analyze education, experience, and workload toward work motivation in the field. Survey approach was used in this research. Sampling was done using a proportionate random sampling as a sampling technique for selecting respondents with total 122 agricultural extension agents in Pekalongan and Jepara regencies. Data sources using primary data and secondary data Multiple regression was used for data analysis. The results of the study show that education, work experience and workload had influence both simultaneously and partially toward work motivation of extension workers in Pekalongan City and Jepara. Good education and better experience with appropriate workload can increase motivation. It need approach to maintain a moderate workload to improve work motivation. Agricultural Extension Workers with high work motivation provide the best performance during extension activities. The conclusion of this research is that all hypotheses in this research are accepted and have a positive and significant influence. Extension workers are expected to be able to maintain their work so that the work motivation of Agricultural Extension workers is maintained.

Keywords: *education, extension workers, material delivery, working experience, workload*

BACKGROUND

Rice productivity in Pekalongan Regency has been the lowest in the North Coast area of Province Central Java with the number of 50.27 quintals/ha in 2019 and 47.05 quintals/ha in 2020. It was followed by Jepara Regency with 69.19 quintals/ha in 2019 and 68.44 quintals/ha in 2020. This is because population growth continues to increase but is not matched by the availability of land, resulting in a narrowing of land and causing a decrease in rice productivity (Listiani et al., 2019). This is due to the less than optimal performance of extension workers so that farmers are not educated to increase the productivity of their agricultural products. From the data, it could be seen that both

ISSN 2580-0566; E-ISSN 2621-9778
http://ejournal2.undip.ac.id/index.php/agrisocionomics
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were the lowest and both regencies had to increase their potential. It could be realized if the role of the agricultural extension agents in performing their jobs could be maximized so that the agriculture extension material could be delivered effectively to the targets.

The role of Agricultural extension would be maximized if the workload provided was proportional based on the working ratio. The role of Agricultural extension would be maximized if the workload provided was proportional based on the working ratio. both in jepara and pekalongan districts one extension worker can hold several assisted villages. Based on Act of Farmers Protection and Empowerment Number 19 of 2013, one extension agents for one village. The proper working ratio is expected to make agricultural extension agents focus on their jobs and responsibilities. However, there have been different findings on each area in Central Java that one agricultural extension agent have responsibility for more than one village. The agricultural extension agent have more additional tasks compared to their main duties and functions so that group assistance is not optimal. Therefore, it is necessary to provide additional formations of agricultural extension agent that are tailored to the analysis of instructor needs in each district. Because farmers in the district need adequate knowledge and skills from agricultural extension workers.

Considering that most of farmers in Indonesia had low education, the government launched a program for young educated farmers (The Board of Counseling and Development of Agriculture Human Resources, 2021). Agricultural extension agents are those who want and have the capacity to provide information, technology, capital access as well as other resources supporting the process to increase productivity, income, and farmers' working efficiency (Presidential Regulation of Republic of Indonesia Number 35 of 2022). A good synergy need to be created between the farmers and the farming counselors, it was expected that rice production could reach the target and rice self-sufficiency could be realized. However, the rice productivity in Central Java has been unbalanced in 2019 and 2020 in some districts/cities.

Factors influencing the performance of agricultural extension agents are education, working experience, and workload (Bahua et al., 2010). Proper education in the working environment would allow someone in performing their work, the working experience would enhance the insight of the agricultural extension agents and it would make them more responsive and mature in overcoming problems. Furthermore, overload work would make agricultural extension agents feel burdened by too much work, making them ineffective in performing the job and function (Refiswal, 2018). Therefore, working motivation is required to make everything works properly and effectively (Handoko, 2001). It goes along with the expression that working motivation might become the medium for employee performance (Bernawi and Arifin, 2012). From the existing elaboration, it could be seen that the role of a agricultural extension agents could be explained by several factors such as education, working experience, and workload. It will become a stronger influence if the agricultural extension agents had strong working motivation. Therefore, the expected effectiveness of the counseling could be achieved.

The real problem that will be brought up in this research was the fact that there was no proper number of agricultural extension agents with the number of villages that become their working areas. The improper number certainly would make the effectiveness of the agricultural extension activity decrease. Regarding the performance of the agricultural extension agents, it has a real impact on the unstable increase of rice productivity, which certainly might bother food stability in the Province of Central Java. The real problem that will be raised in this research is that there is no match between the number of agricultural instructors and the number of villages in their working area. The real

ISSN 2580-0566; E-ISSN 2621-9778
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problem comparison in the two regions is geographical factors and budget limitations. In some areas, there are villages that are geographically dispersed, making it difficult for agricultural instructors to reach these areas effectively. This can cause a mismatch between the number of extension workers and the number of villages. The next factor is budget constraints, where the budget allocation for agricultural instructors may not be sufficient to employ the number of instructors appropriate to the needs of each village. From the problem finding, the author attempts to find out how far the role of education, working experience, and workload towards working motivation of agricultural extension agents. Besides, the involvement of both parties such as the agricultural extension agents and Farmers in agricultural extension activities should also be considered. As expressed by Setyaji et al., (2020) that the involvement of the party who delivers the material and the one who receives the material would provide good synergy and affect the effectiveness of the delivery of material. The results of this research aim to determine what factors influence the work motivation of agricultural extension agents so that they can ultimately increase the capacity of human resources to support the achievement of agricultural development in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was motivated by the discovery of rice production problems in the North Coast of Central Java Province, namely in areas with the lowest rice production as happened in Pekalongan Regency followed by Jepara Regency. This can certainly be avoided if Agricultural Extension Officers can carry out their duties optimally so that counseling is carried out effectively. The role of Agricultural Extension Officers is maximized if the workload is in accordance with the work ratio of one Agricultural Extension Officer for one village (Law on Farmer Protection and Empowerment No. 19 of 2013). Another reason for choosing the research location is because Pekalongan Regency and Jepara Regency are two regencies located in the northern coastal region of Central Java and have relatively similar climate and culture. This research was conducted from December 9 to 16, 2022. The population in this study were Agricultural Extension Workers in Pekalongan Regency 97 people and Jepara Regency 78 people totaling 175 people. Then the sample size using the Slovin formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N\, e^2}$$

Information:
n : Sample
N : Population
e^2 : Error rate or critical value

This research was conducted at a confidence level of 95% or a critical value of 5% so that the sample size can be calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{175}{1+175\ (5\%)^2} = 122$$

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Sampling using proportionate random sampling technique. As explained by Sugiyono (2017) by dividing the population into equal parts. Then it was determined that Agricultural Extension Workers in Pekalongan Regency and Jepara Regency were taken 122 samples, assuming 61 samples for Pekalongan Regency and 61 samples for Jepara Regency.

The data collection technique was conducted through an online questionnaire using Google Forms. This technique was chosen with the consideration that Google Forms is easy to use and has easy online accessibility and works on various devices such as computers, tablets, and cell phones. The question list was arranged digitally and it could be filled by the respondents who have the link in advance. The measurement was performed by questionnaire with questions on each indicator. The score was obtained with a Likert scale. The use of the Likert scale aims to change the primary data obtained into quantitative data so that it could be processed and produced as research data. The questionnaire that would be shared has four options so that the lowest score is 1 and the highest is 4. Data analysis in this research consists of a research instrument test consisting of a validity and reliability test, linear regression analysis. Valid research instruments can produce precise research data (Ghozali, 2011). A reliable instrument means an instrument that can be trusted (Sugiyono, 2017). Meanwhile, multiple linear regression analysis is a statistical method used to determine the relationship between one dependent variable and several independent variables, as well as with intervening variables.

Research Hypothesis

The research hypothesis is a temporary question or answer of research that entirely is an assumption. Based on the elaboration of the problem and the framework, the following hypothesis was formed.

1. H_0 : Education, working experience, and workload do not influence toward working motivation of agricultural extension agent both simultaneously and partially.
2. H_1 : Education, working experience, and workload have influence toward working motivation of agricultural extension agents both simultaneously and partially.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Characteristics of the Pekalongan Region

This research was performed in two different places. The location selected were in District Pekalongan and Jepara. Both locations were selected since they had the lowest production and the common geographic location on the North Coast of Central Java.

District Pekalongan

Based on the study performed by Nugroho and Marwanto (2016), those lands have different levels of land fertility and in general, are suitable to use for farming. To increase farming production, the Government of Pekalongan regency conducted various programs and activities, such as a program to increase the productivity and quality of plants, a program for the provision of superior seeds, a program for building irrigation infrastructure, and a program for the provision of fertilizer and pesticides.

Besides, the government also develops modern farming techniques such as drop irrigation system usage and organic cultivation system (Government of District Pekalongan, 2017). There are still several problems faced by the agricultural sector, there were still some problems faced by the

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farming sectors. One of them was the attack of pest and plant diseases, such as rice pests on rice plants and brown leafhoppers on sugarcane plants (Government of District Pekalongan, 2017). Besides, there are also problems in terms of the maintenance of farming land that had not been quite optimal, such as in the use of fertilizer and pesticides which had not complied with the suggested dose (BPS, 2021).

Farming still becomes a crucial sector for Pekalongan Regency. Besides providing a huge contribution towards the regional economy, the farming sector also becomes the source of main income for most of the people in the region. Agricultural extension agents play a significant role in increasing the productivity and farmers' welfare in Pekalongan Regency. The main job of an agricultural extension agents was to provide technical and non-technical counseling to the farmers, such as plant cultivation techniques, farming land maintenance, superior seed selection, and the use of safe and effective pesticides (BPS, 2020). The agricultural extension process has a positive impact on farmers in each region, including increasing agricultural productivity, introducing innovations, diversifying agriculture, and managing natural resources.

District Jepara

Based on the data from Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) (Statistic Center Board) of Jepara Regency in 2020, the width of farming land in Jepara reaches 50,286 acres. The majority of the commodity produced is rice plants with the production of around 187,952 tons in 2020. Besides, another commodity produced in Jepara Regecny were corn, cassava, soybean, and fruits such as mango, banana, and durian. There are around 20,682 farmers in District Jepara with an average farming productivity of around 3.74 tons per acre (BPS Jepara, 2021).

Challenges in the agricultural sector are becoming increasingly severe, including declining production levels, reduced planting area, and low interest in the younger generation to become farmers. It is feared that the decreasing level of agricultural land productivity and damage to infrastructure in the long term will kill agricultural areas in the future so that land becomes unstrategic and no longer profitable for agricultural businesses. The low income from agricultural land is also a concern that land owners will sell their agricultural land because it is no longer productive.

The agricultural sector is still an important sector for Jepara Regency. Apart from making a major contribution to the regional economy, the agricultural sector is also the main source of income for the majority of residents in this area. Therefore, the role of agricultural extension workers is very important to help increase agricultural enthusiasm while providing innovation in this sector. According to the data from the Counseling Board and the Development of Agricultural Human Resource or BP2SDMP of Jepara Regency (2021), agricultural extension agents play a significant role to help farmers to develop more productive and sustainable farming through technical counseling and empowerment of the farming community. BP2SDMP of Jepara Regency also conducted training and education to improve the quality and the capacity of agricultural extension agents in Jepara Regency.

Descriptive Data of Research Result

Descriptive statistical data from the results of multiple linear regression tests using IBM SPSS Statistics 27 can be seen in Table 1.

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Table 1. Multiple Linear Regression Test Result

No	Variable	Min	Median	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Education (X1)	12	17	19	16.63	1.49
2	Working Experience (X2)	3	6.5	8	5.94	1.39
3	Workload (X3)	9	14	16	13.90	1.20
4	Working Motivation (Y)	7	10.5	12	10.34	1.21

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2023)

Table 1 shows the descriptive data from this study. The education variable has a narrow range of scores from the mean, indicating that the majority of extension workers have the same or almost the same level of education. This may affect their work motivation results. Extension workers with higher levels of education may have broader knowledge and skills, which can increase their motivation to work well. Meanwhile, the work experience variable has a fairly wide range of scores from the mean. The wide range of scores from the mean indicates that there is significant variation in the level of work experience among the extension workers. This could include extension workers who have little experience and those who have longer work experience. Research has shown that the longer a person works in a particular field, the more likely they are to have greater knowledge, skills and confidence in their work. This can increase their motivation to achieve good results.

The workload variable has a fairly small variation from the mean. The narrow range of scores around the mean on the workload variable suggests that the majority of extension workers in the sample have similar levels of workload. A workload that is too low or too high can have a negative impact on work motivation. When workload is too low, extension workers may feel unappreciated or bored, which can decrease their motivation. Conversely, if the workload is too high, extension workers may feel stressed and exhausted, which can also decrease their motivation.

The work motivation variable has a fairly narrow range of scores from the mean. The narrow range of scores around the mean on the work motivation variable indicates that the level of work motivation of extension workers in the population tends to be homogeneous. The low variability in work motivation may be due to the presence of certain factors that dominate and are evenly distributed across the extension worker population. These factors may include consistent incentives, good supervisor support, or strong intrinsic motivation for extension work.

The explanations describe the descriptive statistics of some of the variables measured in the study or survey. Each variable has a specific range of scores measured through the median, mean, and standard deviation. Standard deviation indicates how spread out or how varied the data is from the mean value. These variables are related to several aspects, such as education, work experience, workload, and work motivation (Mangkunegara, 2016). Based on this, it can be said that the characteristics of the sample or population are measured, as well as to see how spread or how much the data varies from the mean.

Research Hypothesis Test

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Hypothesis test was performed in this research after the stage of classic assumption test has been met, such as normality test, linearity test, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinear. This research used double linear regression analysis, and the result was processed using the help of the software IBM SPSS Statistics 27.

Simultaneous Test (F Test)

F Test in this research was performed to determine common effects from the independent variable and dependent variable. The results of hypothesis testing (F Test) simultaneously (together) using IBM SPSS Statistics 27 software are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Output SPSS of Dependent Variable of Working Motivation

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	184,685	3	61,562	34,275	.000[b]
	Residual	211,938	118	1,796		
	Total	396,623	121			

a. Dependent Variable: Working Motivation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Workload, Working Experience, Education

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2023)

Based on the Table 2, it could be seen the score of F value is 34,275 and F table is 2,682. The significant value was 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05. This shows that independent variables consisting of education, working experience, and workload had simultaneously influence the dependent variable i.e. working motivation, therefore, H_0 is accepted and H_1 is rejected. This means that extension workers who have a higher level of education, extensive work experience, and well-managed workload tend to have higher work motivation. The influence of education, working experience, and workload towards working motivation had a dependency on each other (Sondang, 2001). It is in line with the observation result that agricultural extension agent with higher education, with more experience and a proportional workload could improve their working motivation.

Partial Test (t-test)

T-test in this research was performed to determine the common effect of the independent and dependent variables. The partial hypothesis test (t-test) used software IBM SPSS Statistics 27 presented in Table 3.

Table 3. SPSS Output of Dependent Variable of Working Motivation

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.692	1.555		3.017	.043
	Education	.284	.078	.332	3.627	.040
	Working Experience	.188	.035	.114	2.255	.012
	Workload	.646	.105	.431	6.123	.032

a. Dependent Variable: Working Motivation

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2023)

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Data in the SPSS Output Table of the t test results, the significance value of education, work experience, and workload < 0.05 so that partially affect the work motivation of agricultural extension workers. The higher the education of agricultural extension workers, the higher their work motivation. Agricultural extension workers in the field with a strong agricultural education background can provide more informative and effective advice to farmers. They can illustrate more advanced agricultural principles and more innovative solutions, which can motivate farmers to adopt new practices. This is in line with conditions in the field, the higher the education of an agricultural extension worker, the broader his knowledge, so that he is more eager to carry out his duties to solve problems faced by farmers (Kharis, 2015). For example, when farmland is attacked by pests and plant diseases, they are motivated to help farmers.

High work experience can also increase their motivation. Work experience will add to the insight of agricultural extension workers and they will be more responsive and mature in overcoming problems. Extensive work experience in interacting with farmers and solving agricultural problems makes it easier for extension workers to communicate and relate to farmers. This helps extension workers and farmers to build stronger relationships and motivates farmers to listen and accept their advice.

In addition, the right workload can increase the motivation of agricultural extension workers (Sugiarto, et al., 2019). Too high a workload can lead to fatigue and burnout, which in turn can affect their motivation to provide good services to farmers. Therefore, wise workload management has been tried to be implemented by extension workers in the field to maintain their motivation. In this case, education, work experience and workload work together. Extension workers who are highly educated and have a lot of work experience will feel more able to cope with their workload. They feel more useful to farmers and see the results of their work in the form of more productive farmland, which in turn increases their motivation.

Simultaneous Determination Coefficient (R^2)

Simultaneous determination coefficient (R^2) could be used to measure how far the capacity of the independent variable influence the dependent variable. The closer it gets to score 1, the bigger the capacity of the independent variable in explaining the dependent variable. Based on the analysis result using the program IBM SPSS Statistics 27, the simultaneous determination coefficient (R^2) presented in Table 4.

Table 4. SPSS Output of Dependent Variable of Working Motivation

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.682[a]	.466	.452	1.34018

a. Predictors: (Constant), Workload, Working Experience, Education.
b. Dependent Variable: Working Motivation

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2023)

Based on the data result given, it could be concluded that the effect resulted from the independent variable: education, working experience, and workload obtained the score of Adjusted R Square of 0.452. The score shows that 45.2% of the working motivation variable could be explained

ISSN 2580-0566; E-ISSN 2621-9778
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by the independent variable. However, there is around 54.8% of other factors are not included in the model.

Linear Regression Analysis

The objective of linear regression analysis in this research was to interpret the regression output in the form of a table on a regression equation. Based on the Table, regression output with the dependent variable of working motivation could be obtained coefficient score on the education of 0.332, working experience of 0.113, and workload of 0.431. The result was obtained from the Standardized Coefficients Beta. The following is the regression equation formed from this research.

$$Y1 = 4.692 + 0.332X1 + 0.114X2 + 0.431X3$$

The first regression equation had an education variable regression coefficient meaning (X1) of 0.332 which means if the education was increased by one unit, then the working motivation would increase as much as 0.332 unit with the assumption that the other variable had the constant score. It means that the higher education of an agricultural extension agent, the higher their working motivation. Condition on the research field suggests that an agricultural extension agent that had higher education would automatically share the knowledge he received during their time at the educational institution to help solve farmers' problems (Gayatri et al., 2020). Conditions in Jepara and Pekalongan Regencies, extension workers who have high knowledge, extension workers will share the knowledge that has been obtained during education to help solve farmers' problems. The majority of Agricultural Extension Workers in Jepara and Pekalongan Regencies have a fairly high last level of education, namely Bachelor. Further, the working experience variable regression coefficient (X2) which was as much as 0.114 means that if the working experience was increased by one unit, then the working motivation would also increase by as much as 0.114 unit with the assumption that other independent variables had a constant score. It means that the higher the working experience of an agricultural extension agent, the higher their working motivation would be. Based on the observation of agricultural extension agent with long periods of working with farmers, they are more responsive in helping and together with the farmers directly start from the pre-planting to marketing. The majority of extension workers in Pekalongan district have more than 5 years of work experience and have conducted more training for extension workers, so they have higher work motivation compared to extension workers in Jepara district, the majority of whom have less than 5 years of work experience. Workload variable regression variable (X3) was as much as 0.431 which means if the workload was increased by one unit, then the working motivation would also increase as much as 0.431 unit with the assumption that the other independent was constant. It means that the higher workload of an agricultural extension agent might increase their working motivation. The condition on the field suggests that a higher workload would make agricultural extension agent had a higher responsibility as well to complete the tasks given to them in order to support their farmers as well as government policy in agriculture (Jorgi et al., 2019). Both Pekalongan and Jepara districts have an appropriate workload so that they are maximized in carrying out their duties and functions, which ultimately has an impact on increasing the motivation of extension workers in Pekalongan and Jepara districts.

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CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

All hypothesis in this research was stated accepted and they all influence positively and significantly. Hence, training and education programs are required for agricultural extension agent in Pekalongan and Jepara Regency to improve their working motivation and performance so that they could contribute to the development and extension programs in the future. Agricultural extension agents are expected to be able to manage their working pattern in order to maintain their working motivation. It will improve the effectiveness of material delivery for the farmers. It is important to build a strong and trusting relationship between extension workers and farmers. This can be achieved through openness, empathy, listening carefully, and showing concern for farmers' needs and concerns. Extension workers need to use effective communication techniques, such as speaking in a language that farmers can easily understand, using real-life examples, and avoiding complicated technical terms if not necessary.

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