Career Development Influences of Employees Working in Haiti’s Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

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Abstract

Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) provide vital services to individuals within the developing world. Extension personnel are at the heart of extension services because they are the ones who provide essential support, training, and skills to farmers in rural areas. The capacity of extension personnel, therefore, is an essential component of having a robust AET system. The purpose of this research was to explore and describe influences on career development among extension personnel in Haiti. To achieve this purpose, the set objectives of the research were: (a) describe career development influences in a government run extension agency in Haiti; (b) describe career development influences in a private run extension agency in Haiti; (c) describe career development influences in a grassroots extension agency in Haiti; and (d) compare and contrast career development influences in these agencies. Qualitative data from across the agencies showed common positive influences of: (a) educational background, (b) in-service training, (c) intrinsic motivation, and (d) extrinsic motivation. The common negative influences included: (a) lack of resources and (b) environmental hindrances.

Keywords: Haiti; career development; extension education; Caribbean; advisory services
Introduction

Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) provide vital services to individuals in the developing world (Swanson & Rajalahti, 2010). As one half of the world’s hungry and poor are small-scale farmers, EAS help to provide information, training, linkages to markets, and price discovery skills that help farmers create a mechanism for combating poverty (Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services [GFRAS], n.d.). Through these services, farmers are able to find the education and training needed to help improve his or her capacity to increase crop yields and secure a viable future (Jiggins, Samanta, & Olawoye, 1997). According to Anderson and Feder (2004), “extension services have the potential to improve agricultural productivity and increase farmers’ incomes, especially in developing economies where more than 90% of the world’s nearly one million extension personnel are located” (p. 41). EAS play a fundamental role in agricultural development around the globe and as such, the importance of these services could not be emphasized enough (Davis, 2008).

The present study investigated career development influences of employees within Haiti’s EAS. The levels of extreme poverty in Haiti indicate a dire need for quality EAS throughout the country. EAS services in developing countries like Haiti have contributed to the “reduction of hunger and poverty, increase adoption of improved technologies, and increase productive and capacity of clientele” (Swanson & Davis, 2014, p. 2). Because EAS has profound role in agricultural development, it is necessary for extension personnel to experience career development. The quality and development of these extension personnel, after all, determines the overall quality of EAS institutions (Personnel and Organizational Sub-Committee of the Extension Committee on Organizations and Policy [ECOP], 2002; Swanson & Rajalahti, 2010). Minimal research has been conducted on career development influences of extension personnel in Haiti and this research aimed to fill the gap.

Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

According to Dalton, Thomas, and Price (1977), an individual must be able to change or he or she will stagnate. With a growing and changing world, employees and institutions have an urgent need to either grow or become obsolete (Rennekamp & Nall, 1993). EAS employees, in particular, must experience growth and development in order to address the contemporary challenges that face the agricultural sector (FAO, n.d.). Career development is a concept that allows EAS employees to develop within his or her career through lifelong learning so he or she is best equipped to do his or her job (FAO, n.d.; Rennekamp & Nall, 1993).

Career development can be defined as the “act of acquiring information and resources that enables one to plan a program of lifelong learning related to his or her work life” (Malone, 1984, p. 216). It spans one's entire lifetime. Career development allows for an employee to grow in his or her respective field over a period of time, which solidifies who he or she is and how he or she operates at work.

Many career development models have emerged in an attempt to understand the dynamics of career development within EAS (Conklin, Hook, Kelbaugh, & Nieto, 2002; Flavell 1971; Kohlberg & Kramer, 1969; Rennekamp & Nall, 1993; Stone & Coppernoll, 2004). Most of these career development models can be classified into one of two categories: (a) competency based, and (b) career stages. Competency based models emphasize knowledge, skills,
attitudes, and behaviors needed by extension personnel in order to experience career development (Cooper & Graham, 2001; Stone & Coppernoll, 2004). Conversely, career stage models address the needs, motivators, and organizational strategies EAS institutions should focus on to help extension employees progress through the multiple phases of career growth (Kutilek, 2002).

Stone and Bieber (1997) defined competency as the “application of knowledge, technical skills, and personal characteristics that lead to outstanding performance” (p. 1). Stone and Bieber suggested competencies ought to be used to help improve the performance and development of extension personnel. Competency models have been created in order to identify specific core skills and characteristics needed by EAS employees (Rennekamp & Nall, 1994; Stone & Coppernoll, 2004). These models have been used to help leaders within EAS institutions facilitate the professional development of extension employees, which can improve the overall quality of services offered by EAS (Suvedi & Kaplowitz, 2016).

The second common category for career development models is career stages. Dalton et al. (1977) provided the original framework for understanding career development through their Four Stage of Professional Career Model. The researchers created this four-part model of career development because of the concerns they had with the existing career models, specifically the pyramid model. Dalton et al. (1977) argued that the commonly used pyramid model did not consider important realities. Dalton et al. (1977) claimed, Organizations found that the pyramidal model failed to take important realities into account. Too often, they found themselves promoting a key technical specialist to a management position because it was the only way to reward him. More and more firms began to set up special new pay and promotion schemes such as the dual pay and ladder for their professional employees in order to recognize the critical contributions they could make as individuals. (p. 21)

As a result, Dalton et al. (1977) developed the following four successive career stages: (a) apprentice, (b) colleague, (c) mentor, and (d) sponsor. Each stage involves different tasks, relationships, and psychological changes.

Change and challenges are inevitable components of working within EAS (Rennekamp & Nall, 1993). As such, career development can offer a practical approach for extension personnel to adapt and develop as a professional (Burke, 2002). Both career development models, the competency based and career stages, offer a framework for employees to experience career development. Despite which model is used, it is important to investigate the influences that impact extension personnel’s career development journey. Understanding these influences may help professionals create strategies that use positive influences to facilitate career development.

Research has been conducted on the positive and negative influences that impact career development of extension personnel. Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) investigated the foundations of job motivation in the workplace. Herzberg et al. (1959) proposed the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, which states that employees are influenced by two independent dimensions: (a) workplace factors that cause job satisfaction, and (b) workplace factors that prevent job dissatisfaction. Herzberg et al. proposed that these two dimensions are not opposites, but instead entirely different components. Motivators produce job satisfaction. Hygienes prevent job dissatisfaction. Herzberg et al. concluded that employees are more encouraged by
The present researched used the Motivation-Hygiene Theory as a framework to classify positive and negative influences on extension personnel’s career development. Also using the Motivation-Hygiene Theory as a framework, Strong and Harder (2009) investigated factors that influence extension personnel’s decision to remain in his or her career. They found salary, job stress, heavy work-loads, balancing work and family, other financial opportunities, and job dissatisfaction were factors that negatively impacted extension personnel retention (Strong & Harder, 2009). On the other hand, mentoring programs, training, staff development, accolades, and having support in the work place were motivators that positively influenced extension personnel retention (Strong & Harder, 2009). They concluded Extension should use the positive and negative factors as a guide for creating strategies to decrease extension personnel’s stress levels and job dissatisfaction over time (Strong & Harder, 2009).

Arnold and Place (2010) explored the influences that shape Florida extension agent’s employment decisions at different career stages. The researchers found that positive influences at the across all levels of the career development stages included: (a) personal traits, skills, and knowledge, (b) motivators, (c) support systems, (d) career growth opportunities, (e) collaboration, and (f) career management strategies. Negative influences across all stage levels included: (a) lack of direction, (b) job pressures, (c) personal work management issues, (d) mandated work requirements, (e) work issues, (f) salary disparity, (g) performance measures, (h) career overload, and (i) job dissatisfies. Arnold and Place suggested that further research should be conducted on career influences on extension personnel in other U.S. states and internationally.

It is important to note that the three main types of EAS institutions around the globe are public, private, and civil society organizations such as grassroots organizations and NGOs (Swanson & Rajalahti, 2010). Public extension institutions are often operated by the government. In most developing countries public extension is organized as ministries of agriculture (Swanson & Rajalahti, 2010).

Understanding the career development of personnel in these groups is an important component to overall effectiveness.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this research was to explore and describe influences on career development among extension personnel in Haiti. The objectives of the research were as follows:

1. Describe career development influences in a government run extension agency in Haiti;
2. Describe career development influences in a private run extension agency in Haiti;
3. Describe career development influences in a grassroots extension agency in Haiti and
4. Compare and contrast career development influences in these agencies.

**Methodology**

This study used a qualitative design in order to achieve the research purpose and objectives (Merriam, 1998). This approach is most appropriate when a researcher aims to “discover and understand a phenomenon,
a process, or the perspective and worldviews of the people involved” (Merriam, 1998, p. 11). Specifically, this research used an interpretive case study methodology to describe the influences on career development among Haitian extension personnel. A case study is “an intensive holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriam, 1998, p. 34).

In order to understand the phenomenon of career development influences of Haitian extension personnel, three case studies were conducted, focusing on: (a) public, or governmental, (b) private, and (c) grassroots. For the purposes of this research grassroots organizations can be defined as bottom-up, local development organizations (Uphoff, 1993). Grassroots are distinguished from national or regional organizations by their accessibility to locals. Grassroots organizations and private institutions have both played an important role in supporting agricultural development in ways the Haitian government has been unable to (Arias, Leguía, & Sy, 2013). As a result, public, private, and grassroots organizations represent the three major types of EAS institutions in Haiti (GFRAS, n.d.). For this reason, these three types of institutions were the focus of the present study. A semi-structured interview technique was used in order to provide an avenue for the informants to explore their experiences. This fairly open framework allowed for the interview to be focused, but conversational (Merriam, 1998).

To select the specific employees within Haiti’s public, private, and grassroots EAS organizations, this study used a broad structure of extension systems that was outlined by Bahal, Swanson, and Earner (1992). Haiti’s agricultural sector does not follow the familiar and established U.S. Extension system structure. Furthermore, Haiti follows a pluralistic extension system, which means many different types of organizations offering extension services to Haitian farmers at the same time (GFRAS, n.d.). Therefore, the quality and structure of each EAS organization may not be consistent with others around the country (Arias et al., 2013). Bahal et al. (1992) provided a broad framework that applies to most extension systems around the world, which was appropriate for the present study.

According to Bahal et al. (1992), worldwide, there are more than 600,000 extension workers that fit into one of four categories: (a) administrative staff, (b) subject-matter specialist (SMS), (c) fieldworkers, and (d) multipurpose unidentified people. Although there are regional differences within extension systems around the world, per Swanson, Farner, and Bahal (1990), the breakdown of extension personnel is as follows: 7% are administrative staff, 14% are SMS, and 79% are fieldworkers. The present study, therefore, selected a distribution of extension personnel that had administrative, SMS, and fieldwork positions.

The first case was the public extension institution, the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARNDR, n.d.). MARNDR is the primary institution responsible for agricultural development within the country (GFRAS, n.d.). Haiti is divided administratively into 10 departments, and MARNDR is located in Damien, near the capital city of Port-au-Prince, which is in the West Department (Arias et al., 2013). MARNDR shares a campus with the University of Haiti, which allows for collaboration between the two institutions (GFRAS, n.d.). A total of 7 informants were selected from MARNDR: 3 administrative staff, 2 SMS, and 2 fieldworkers.

The second case was a private institution called Darbouco S.A. The private sector plays a critical role within Haiti’s
EAS (GFRAS, n.d.). Although they are small and fragmented, private agricultural institutions have helped significantly in the commercialization of inputs, such as fertilizers, seeds, and agricultural tools (GFRAS, n.d.). Darbouco S.A. is a Haitian-run corporation located in the Port-au-Prince suburb of Pétion-ville. The organization was established in October 1948 with the goal of provided quality agricultural products (Darbouco, n.d.). This organization has two branches, both located in Pétion-ville. This organization serves as one of the main importers distributor of agricultural inputs and equipment in Haiti. Along with four other private institutions, Darbouco S.A. is responsible for at least 95% of the fertilizer, pesticide, and seed sales in Haiti (Abbot et al., 1995). In addition to fertilizer, pesticide and seed, Darbouco also provides fungicides, herbicides, and spraying equipment (Darbouco, n.d.). The research team planned on interviewing 6 individuals within Darbouco S.A., however only 2 interviews, an administrative staff and an SMS, were conducted per the request of the president.

Finally, the third case was a grassroots organization called Mouvman Peyizan Papay (MPP). Farmer based organizations, cooperatives and grassroots organizations such as MPP are the foundation for rural development activities within rural Haiti (GFRAS, n.d.). MPP was founded on March 20, 1973 by Chavannes Jean Baptiste (MPP, n.d.). MPP is recognized as the largest peasant movement and grassroots organization in Haiti (MPP, n.d.). The organization has 60,000 members which includes 20,000 women and 10,000 youth. This organization operates in all 10 of Haiti’s departments but is headquartered in Hinche, a city in Haiti’s Central Plateau Department. The Haiti’s Central Plateau Department is home to roughly 13% of the Haitian population and most of these Haitians are rural work in the agricultural sector (MPP, n.d.). A total of 7 individuals were interviewed at MPP: 2 administrators, 2 SMS, and 3 fieldworkers.

Across all three cases, a total of 16 EAS employees were interviewed for this study. Of the 16 employees interviewed, 6 were administration, 5 were SMS, and 5 were fieldworkers. The research team decided to conclude the data collection portion of the study at 16 participants because informants within the same positions began to give the same responses which meant that data reached saturation of information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

The lead researcher developed an interview question guide that facilitate the discussion with the EAS employees. The interview guide was passed through an expert panel for review. Members of this expert panel included university faculty, Haitian extension agents, and Haitian extension researchers. The interview guide was then piloted with 5 Haitians within the agricultural sector in order to ensure that the questions were appropriate (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher revised the guide based on the feedback from the expert panel and the pilot tests. The revisions helped to make the interview guide robust and effective.

The rigor of this research was established using Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) concept of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To establish credibility, the lead researcher used triangulation of the information, and of the investigator. There was regular communication between the lead researcher, research team, and experts in the field. Member checking was also used in order to ensure that the data collected accurately depicted the thoughts and reflections of the informants. The lead researcher also used peer debriefing with the research team and experts in the field in
order to ensure that the truth-value concern was addressed in the research.

In order to establish transferability, the lead researcher provided thick descriptions of the methodological process and used purposive sampling in selecting the informants. To establish dependability, the lead researcher kept an audit trail that included the raw data, notes, and drafts of findings of this study. The lead researcher also used a code-recode strategy to ensure dependability (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Walker, 2013). Finally, confirmability was established through the use of a reflexive journal, which included the weekly reasoning behind all methodological decisions made by the lead researcher.

After the 16 interviews were conducted the data was transcribed in Haitian Creole. A thematic analysis was used to identify themes within the data (Creswell, 2013). Open coding was used to detect themes throughout the interviews. After themes were created they were translated from Haitian Creole to English.

**Subjectivity Statement**

The lead researcher is Haitian born, but has been living in the United States since 1998. The lead researcher has extensive research and development experience in Haiti and currently works for a NGO that operates in the North Department of the country. The lead researcher’s strong ties to Haiti and deep faith in agricultural education was monitored so as not to interfere with the data collection and analysis. Because the lead researcher was the instrument for this study, it was imperative that biases that may have impacted the research process were recognized and report. Strategies to establish trustworthiness helped to minimize the impact of any unidentified biases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Case 1: Public Extension**

The first objective was to describe career development influences in a government run extension agency. For this objective, 7 individuals from MARNDR were interviewed (MA1-MA7). Findings from EAS administrators showed positive influences of: (a) educational background, (b) in-service training, (c) goal setting, (d) intrinsic motivation such as patriotism and setting an example for family members, (e) extrinsic motivation such as promotion and improving expertise, (f) religion, and (g) character traits (MA2, MA4, MA5). The most common positive influences were in-service training, intrinsic motivation, and character traits. An example of in-service training as a positive influence was MA2, who stated, “I’ve arrived at my current position by the grace of God, but I continue to develop because of the trainings and seminars I attend.” MA4 also stated, “Without trainings, I am nothing.”

Negative influences among EAS administrators included: (a) lack of resources, such as limited funding, (b) environmental hindrances, such as government instability, and (c) career overload (MA2, MA4, MA5). The most common negative influence was lack of resources, as seen through the statement of MA5, “At times I can’t do my work because we don’t have what we need. I want to advance, but it’s hard when you don’t have the funds that you need. Sometimes I plan a program and it gets canceled because we don’t have the money.” MA2 also stated, “We don’t have the funding we need to do what this job calls for us to do.”

Among the MARNDR SMS, positive influences included: (a) educational background, (b) in-service training, (c) mentorship, (d) intrinsic motivation such as patriotism and clientele satisfaction, (e) social networks, and (d) extrinsic motivation such as promotion and improving expertise.
(MA1, MA7). The most common positive influence was intrinsic motivation. MA1 stated, “People depend on me so I must be excellent in my work.”

Negative influences to SMS career development included: (a) lack of resources such as limited funding (b) interpersonal issues with co-workers, and (c) environmental hindrances such as government instability (MA1, MA7). The most common negative influence was lack of resources. MA1 stated, “We need resources to get our job done but the government doesn’t have enough resources to make things happen.” MA7 also stated, “My greatest barrier at this point is funding. My department has good ideas but we don’t have the money to materialize the ideas.”

Positive influences among MARND fieldworkers included: (a) in-service training, (b) mentorship, (c) intrinsic motivation such as clientele satisfaction, and (d) extrinsic motivation such as promotions (MA3, MA6). The most common positive influences were in-service training and extrinsic motivation. MA6 stated, “If you’re not getting training as an agronomist, you should find another job. I go through trainings every few months to make sure I am effective.” MA3 also stated, “Yeah, I go to seminars and workshops, they help me a lot.”

Negative influences among MARND fieldworkers included: (a) lack of resources such as funding, and (b) environmental hindrances such as government instability (MA3, MA6). The most common negative influence was lack of resources. MA3 stated, “I don’t have what I need in order to get my job done sometimes. If I had all the money in the world, I would be able to do my work more effectively, but I am working on a limited budget.” MA6 also stated, “The greatest source of our ineffectiveness is a lack of funding.”

Case 2: Private Extension

The second objective of this research was to describe career development influences in a private run extension agency. One individual was interviewed at the administrative level, and one individual was interviewed at the SMS level (D1 and D2). The positive influences among the administrator were: (a) educational background, (b) mentorship, (c) intrinsic motivation such patriotism and leaving a legacy, and (d) character traits (D1). Related to intrinsic motivation, D1 stated, “In 10 years, I am going to be retired. I hope to cross my hands and see this organization flourish because I worked so hard to continue to that.” In regards to character traits, the informant stated, “You will not get anywhere without ethics. You must have integrity in what you do and treat people with respect as you respect yourself. I am where I am because of my ethics and my honesty.”

Negative influences to career development included (a) lack of resources such as funding, (b) interpersonal issues, and (c) environmental hindrances such as government instability and poverty in Haiti. The most prominent negative influence was lack of resources. D1 stated, “I have much planned for this organization, but we need more resources. This has been a barrier for me. I want to do grand things but a lack of resources hinders me.”

Positive influences among the SMS employee included: (a) educational background, (b) in-service training, and (c) goal setting (D2). The most prominent positive influence was in-service training. D2 said, “I get a lot of training. Not many people can do what I do as a client counselor, so Darbouco makes sure that I get a lot of training.” D2 also said, “My career pathway has been most impacted by the
knowledge and expertise I have received from trainings.”

Negative influences included: (a) lack of resources such as knowledge, and (b) environmental hindrances such as government instability (D2). Talking about lack of resources, D2 stated, “Sometimes I just don’t know the answer to certain questions my clients ask me. That’s why try to go to a lot of trainings.” D2 also stated, “My company serves many people throughout the country, but we lack the resources to expand our operations.”

**Case 3: Grassroots Extension**

The third objective was to describe career development influences in a grassroots extension agency. For this objective, seven employees from MPP were interviewed (MP1 to MP7). The positive influences on career development among administrators included: (a) intrinsic motivation such as patriotism, clientele satisfaction, and legacy, (b) goal setting, (c) mentorship, and (d) social networks (MP1, MP2). The most common positive influence was intrinsic motivation. MP1 said, “I work hard so that I can finish this work and be proud of it when I finish. I will retire from this work soon, and I want to make sure I set up this organization well and for success.”

Negative influences that impacted career development for administrative were: (a) lack of resources such as funding, (b) environmental hindrances such as government instability and government persecution, and (c) Interpersonal issues (MP1, MP2). The most common negative influence was environmental hindrances. MP1 stated, “You’ve got to understand, the government has a magnificent impact on everything we do. Sometimes they stand as the biggest barrier for my development and the development of my organization.”

Among SMS, positive influences included: (a) educational background, (b) intrinsic motivation such as feeling indebted and patriotism, (c) extrinsic motivation such as promotions, and (d) in-service trainings (MP3, MP5). The most common positive influence was in-service training. MP3 said, “Without training, there is no work. I am who I am professionally because of the training I have received and continue to receive.”

Negative influences among SMS included: (a) lack of resources such as funding, and (b) career overload. In regards to lack of resource, MP3 said, “I want to help as many people as possible, but money is lacking and we never have all that we need to complete this big work.”

Positive influences on career development among fieldworkers in MPP included: (a) intrinsic motivation such as praise and feeling indebted, (b) extrinsic motivation such as salary and promotions, (c) in-service trainings, (d) goal setting, and (e) social networks (MP4, MP6, MP7). The most prominent positive influence was extrinsic motivation. MP4 said, “Without work, you don’t eat. I work to eat and so that my family can eat.”

Negative influences included: (a) lack of resources such as limited funding (b) environmental hindrances such as government instability, and (c) interpersonal issues. The most prominent issue was lack of resources. MP4 said “Well, one barrier is that we don’t have what we need to get the job done sometimes. We need more resources to get the work done with excellence. This has hindered me from progressing in my career.”

**Cross-Case Comparison**

The final objective was to compare and contrast the influences that impact career development of extension personnel across government, private, and grassroots extension organizations in Haiti (see Table 1). The positive influences that were unique
for administrators across all three types of organizations were: (a) character traits, (b) religion, and (c) intrinsic motivation of wanting to leave a legacy. SMS workers had no unique positive influences. The positive influences unique for fieldworkers were: (a) intrinsic motivation of feeling indebted to work hard and receiving praise, and (b) extrinsic motivation of receiving a salary.

Table 1
Comparison of Positive and Negative Influences for EAS Employees in Haiti

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Influences</th>
<th>Government AD</th>
<th>Government SMS</th>
<th>Government FW</th>
<th>Private AD</th>
<th>Private SMS</th>
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<th>Grassroots AD</th>
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Note. AD = administrators; SMS = subject matter specialists; FW = field workers

Administrators and SMS employees identified their educational background as a positive influence on their career development, whereas fieldworkers did not explicitly identify educational background as a positive influence. All three types of EAS employees identified the following factors as positive influences: (a) intrinsic motivation of patriotism and clientele satisfaction, (b) in-service trainings, (c) goal setting, and (d) mentorship.

As for negative influences, administrators revealed an environmental hindrance of government persecution. SMS had the distinct negative influence of lack of knowledge. Administrators and SMS had the distinct negative influence of career overload. All three types of positions had the negative influences of: (a) lack of resources as seen through limited funding (b) environmental hindrances as seen through government instability, and (c) interpersonal issues.

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

Extension Personnel in a Government Run Extension Agency

MARNDR extension personnel most commonly identified in-service training as an essential positive influence on career development. The importance of in-service training was seen through many of the statements. Researchers affirmed there is a great need for extension personnel to receive
in-service training in order to be successful in his or her career (Arnold & Place, 2010; Burke, 2002; Kutilek, 2000). As the leading agricultural institution in Haiti, it is essential for MARNDR to continue providing in-service training opportunities for all employees at every level and position. Lack of funding within the organization may lead the institution to under prioritizing training, but without continuous training the employees risk growing stagnant (Kutilek, 2000).

Educational background was another prominent positive influence that was identified by nearly all MARNDR employees. When probed about this question, respondents said most MARNDR employees are graduates from the University of Haiti. Although educational background and past experiences give organizations a competitive advantage (Arnold & Place, 2010), MARNDR is at great risk by not have a diversified workforce (Grogan & Eshelman, 1998). Because most staff members are graduates from the University of Haiti, there leaves little room for other qualified people to join MARNDR.

According to Grogan and Eshelman (1998), recruiting and retaining a diverse staff is a priority in an extension system. For MARNDR to best position employees for success, it is recommended that leadership consider ways of diversifying the workforce. Homogeneity in educational background may lead extension employees in MARNDR having the same strengths but also the same weaknesses as their fellow employees. Difficulty will arise when there is a need for diverse thinking (Grogan & Eshelman, 1998). Fortunately, Haiti has many strong agricultural higher education institutions within the country. MARNDR benefits from being in the same city as four of the six leading agricultural schools, which means many qualified entry-level extension agents are miles from their headquarters. It is recommended that MARNDR investigate diversifying their employee options.

**Extension Personnel in a Private Run Extension Agency**

Darbouco’s administration identified the intrinsic motivation of leaving a legacy and mentorship as two major positive influences on career development. Researchers support the notion of using mentorship programs to support development (Kutilek, 2000; Rennekamp & Nall, 1994; Strong & Harder, 2009). Although mentorship was mentioned there was no indication that Darbouco intentionally invested in a mentorship program with employees. In fact, informal mentorship was the only type of mentorship mentioned.

Because character traits and leaving a legacy were also mentioned, it would be beneficial for Darbouco to invest in an official mentorship program within the institution. This program can ensure that leaders are investing in employees and instilling character traits believed to be essential for the job. Furthermore, because there is a strong culture of privacy, an official mentorship program can be the best way for leadership to increase levels of trust within the organization. Perhaps in the future with a mentorship program, Darbouco’s administrative leadership can feel comfortable enough to have researchers interview more employees.

**Extension Personnel in a Grassroots Extension Agency**

Intrinsic motivation was identified as a prominent positive influences on career development for MPP employees. Researchers support the notion of using intrinsic motivation to help increase employee satisfaction and retention (Herzberg et al. 1959; Strong & Harder, 2009). MPP in particular, had almost every
employee indicate that clientele satisfaction positively influenced their career development. In order to ensure that employees are continuously receiving feedback on clientele satisfaction, MPP should invest in ensuring that the organization has a robust evaluation system that enables employees to receive direct feedback from clientele.

Creating an evaluation system for clientele would allow employees to see their positive impact, but it would also show the organization areas that are in need of improvements. A second highly mentioned positive influence was goal setting. By identifying areas of improvement through evaluations, leadership would be able to set goals for the entire organization so that the overall effectiveness of individuals and the organization can improve. A robust evaluation system could bring great benefits to MPP. An evaluation systems have a possibility of increasing the overall effectiveness of this grassroots extension agency.

Lack of resources was the only negative influence identified by every MPP employee. MPP is recommended to aim to build partnerships with other extension agencies (World Bank, 2012). Specifically, MPP should investigate ways that the organization could partner with other grassroots or nonprofit agencies around Haiti to maximize their efforts. MPP should also investigate ways that the organization could partner with MARNDR in order to reach more areas in Haiti. Although there is a culture of distrust, a collaboration between grassroots and public can prove to be beneficial for all parties involved (World Bank, 2012).

Implications

Many factors positively and negatively impact the career development of Haiti’s extension personnel across all types of positions. In order for extension agencies to have an effective organization it is important for leaders within these organizations to identify the both positive and negative factors that impact employees career development. Identifying positive and negative influences is important because these factors could ultimately lead to success or failure within employee’s career progression. (Herzberg et al. 1959; Strong & Harder, 2009).

In Haiti’s case, extension agencies could use inexpensive positive influences to help mitigate the effects of the negative influences on career development. For example, intrinsic motivation can be used as a tool to help extension personnel overcome interpersonal issues. Organizations could cultivate a common culture of patriotism to unite co-workers. Likewise, mentorship could be a resource that helps employees overcome career overload. Identifying positive and negative influences could have a profound positive impact on the career development of extension workers in Haiti.

References


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