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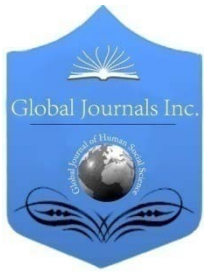

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Post-Retirement Engagement Plan among Oil Company Workers in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: Is there Interest in Agricultural Investment?

Ofuoku, A.U. [α] & Ekine, D.I. [σ]

Abstract- Workers, including oil company workers are advised to plan for their exit from their employing firms or establishments to avoid been driven below poverty line after retirement. There is also advocacy for people to invest in agriculture by state and federal governments. This study therefore examined the level of interest in agricultural investment among oil company workers in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, in their post-retirement engagement plans. From among the workers in the oil companies operating in the study area, 232 respondents were selected and data were elicited from them with the use of questionnaire. The data were treated with the application of descriptive statistics and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis. The level of interest in agricultural investment among the oil company workers is low (31.03%) just as most of them had 11-15 years left to be in service and most (68.53%) of them planned to remain in urban settlements after retirement. Those who planned to engage in farming gave reasons such as interest, ready market, contacts with farmers and extension agents, state of world oil market and government advocacy as the propelling factors. Their level of preparedness was influenced inversely by the number of years they had left to be in service (r = 0.886). It is recommended that extension agencies should organize training programmes for them at intervals to enhance their entrepreneurial and technical skills in agriculture. This set of people should be made opinion leaders on getting back to their villages. Other workers who had not indicated interest in agricultural investment after retirement should be persuaded to develop interest in agriculture.

Keywords: post-retirement engagement, agriculture, plantation agriculture, fish farming, poultry farming, return migration, rural settlement.

I. Introduction

Workers plan and prepare for retirement some years to their terminal year. This is to provide for additional source of income or create income for themselves in their post-retirement years. People are always advised to prepare for their retirement by making some investments during their active years in service. This advice is auspicious in the extant irregular payment and delayed payment of pension to retirees. This is to enable them make both ends meet in the envisaged period of lack or limited income. Some of the consequences of retirement unplanned for is loss of social status and ill-health prompted by low and sometimes, irregular income in form of pension (Agbagbara, 2009). It is therefore, wise for people to prepare adequately for retirement.

From observations almost all the people who are fortunate enough to work till retirement discover that it takes more than just the monthly pensions paid to meet their material needs.

Post-retirement life is different from life in service so it has to be consciously prepared for. Failure to prepare for post-retirement life may have driven many retirees to live below poverty line. This is the reason those who failed to prepare for life in the period, struggle to no avail to get along. Ofuoku (2012) found that most retirees embark on return migration to their villages of origin after retirement, reason for which is avoidance of financial insolvency of the household. Cost of living in the village is lower than that of the urban settlements. In this study, Ofuoku (2012) found that most retirees got engaged in agriculture on getting back to their villages. It is widely known that agriculture activities are the major occupations in the rural areas (Ekong, 2003). Gautam (1999) asserts that return migrants acquire land and occupy themselves with farming as they relocate to their villages as they had saved money for such, while working in the urban settlements.

In the pre-oil era in Nigeria, there was boom in agriculture. That was in the pre-independence period. After Nigeria gained independence, the oil boom emerged. This emergence of oil boom led to a high rate of urbanization as a consequence of the influx of oil exploring and servicing firms in the Niger Delta Region. As a result of the oil boom, most educated young men and women jettisoned farming to work in the oil firms. The educated young men and women consequently started looking down on farming. This was how agricultural sector lost labour through rural-urban migration (Ofuoku and Chukwuji, 2012).

The oil business is now a dwindling one, considering the current price of petroleum in the World

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market. Various state governments have been carrying out advocacy and empowerment programmes to encourage people to pay less attention to occupations related to petroleum. This is on the realization of the reality of the consequences of the over-dependence on oil to run the economy. The question now is on weather oil workers will develop interest in agriculture on their retirement. This study was therefore carried out to ascertain the level of interest in agricultural activities among oil company workers when they finally retire. Specifically the study sought to determine the number of years left for workers to retire, ascertain where they intend to stay after retirement, identify what they intend to do after retirement; and determine their level of preparedness in terms of post-retirement.

It was hypothesized that the level of preparedness of workers to agricultural engagement is not influenced by number of years left for them to be in the service of the oil company.

II. Methodology

This study took place in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. It is made up of the state surrounding the Delta of River Niger in Southern Nigeria. These states include Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom and Cross Rivers States. In all the state there are inundations of urban settlements as a result of oil exploration activities and their gains.

At the first stage, 67% of the Niger Delta States were randomly selected to arrive at four (4) states including Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers and Cross Rivers states.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select oil companies operating in the states. At the third stage, respondents were randomly selected from among the workers in their respective canteens during their break period. This resulted to the selection of 40 workers from Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Port-Harcourt, 51 personnels in Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, Warri, 36 personnels of Agip Oil Company, Omok, Rivers State, 43 workers of Cheveron Nigeria Limited, Warri, 26 workers in Mobil Oil Company in Eket, Cross River State and 36 Shell workers in Bayelsa State (Off-shore facilities). This resulted to the selection of 232 respondents.

Data collected were analyzed with the use of frequency counts and percentages, and means derived from 4-point Likert's type scale. The hypothesis was tested with the use of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation.

Data were collected with the use of questionnaire, with the help of enumerations in the community development departments of the respective companies.

III. Results and Discussion

a) Number of years to retirement

Most (33.19%) of the oil company workers had between 11–15 years to retire (Table 1). Some (21.98%) of them had 6-10 years to retire, while 12.50% of them had 16-20 years to retire.

Many (11.21%) of them had 1-5 years left to retire and 10.34% had 21-25 years for them to retire. Very few of them (5.60% and 5.17%) had 26-30 years and 31-35 years respectively to retire. In all, most (66.38%) of them had 1-15 years left to retire. Since, according to Agbagbara (2009) workers who retire find that it takes more than just monthly payments of their pensions to meet their material needs, they should have prepared or been preparing for additional source of income after retirement. Life in retirement is very much different from life in employment (Agbagbara, 2009). Workers need to prepare for retirement early enough as failure to do that may drive many of them to live below poverty line.

Table 1 : Number of years to retirement (n=232)

Year	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5	26	11.21
6-10	51	21.98
11-15	77	33.19
16-20	29	12-50
21-25	24	10.34
26-30	13	5.60
31-35	12	5.17

b) Proposed place of residence on retirement

Most (68.53%) of the respondents proposed to remain in urban areas after retirement, while 31.47% of them proposed to embark on return migration after retirement (Table 2). Those that planned to keep on living in the urban areas are suspected to be among those who look down on agriculture related activities as a way of earning livelihood. Ofuoku and Chukwuji (2012) assert that as a result of oil boom, educated ones in the rural areas started looking down on farming but preferred being engaed in white collar jobs.

The proposed return migration of some of them is attributed to farming activities which they plan to engage in during retirement years. The major occupation in rural areas is farming/agriculture related activities (Ofuoku, 2015). It is also suspected that they

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liked to return to rural areas to avoid financial insolvency of their households since the cost of living in the rural communities is lower (Ofuoku, 2012).

Table 2 : Proposed place of residence at retirement

Place	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Rural settlement	73	34.47
Urban settlement	159	68.53

c) Proposed engagement on retirement

Most (31.03%) of the workers proposed to be engaged in farming on retirement (Table 3). Others planned to engage in consultancy, buying and selling; and few had planned to engage in any activity for additional source of income. The result implies that most of them have plans to engage themselves in various activities. However, most of them do not plan to be engaged in agriculture related activities. This is attributed to the little amount of their personal physical labour involved in carryout such activities. Another reason may be related to the long gestation period of agricultural enterprises which they may not be patient enough for.

Those of them who plan to engage in farming may either engage themselves in plantation agriculture, fish farming or poultry farming which they are expected to have started or be preparing gradually for Ofuoku (2012) found that most return migrants to the rural areas of Delta State, Nigeria were engaged in agriculture related occupations on settling down in their respective villages.

Table 3 : Proposed additional source of income on retirement

Proposed engagement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Farming	72	31.03
Consultancy	21	9.05
Contract work	33	14.22
Buying and selling of oil related items	54	23.28
buying and selling of domestic consumables	46	19.83
None	6	2.59

Having this result in mind, and engagement in agricultural industry being our major concern, this study is from now to the end, going to concentrate on those who plan embarking in agricultural activities on retirement. This forms the major thrust of this study

d) Reason behind preference to retire into farming

The respondents had multiple reasons for proposing to subscribe to farming after retirement (Table 4). They preferred to retire into farming because of their interest (mean = 3.57) in farming, ready market for agricultural produce (mean = 3.78), the contract they had with farmers (mean = 3.72) and the contact they had with extension agents (mean = 2.71). Other reasons given included the state of world oil market (mean = 3.44) and government advocacy for investment in agriculture (mean = 3.17).

Interest is very paramount in every human endeavour. Interest forms the first motivating factor in anything done by human beings. Hence they indicate that first of all they are interested in farming. Their interest may have been aroused by the ready market for farm produce and their interactions with farmers and extension agents. Their interest can also be attributed to the fall in world oil price and the progress made in the development of alternative source of fuel by advanced nations. While heeding the calls by governments for people to engage in farming, to enhance the production of food and raw materials, they decided to want to retire into farming. Ofuoku (2012) suggests that it is advantageous for return migrants to come back to their villages because they may form opinion leadership that will aid extension services in delivering service to the farmers who have little or no cosmopolitan exposure.

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Table 4 : Reasons for preference to retire into farming (n = 72)

Reasons	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Score	Mean
Interest	41(164)	31(93)	0(0)	0(0)	257	3.57 *
Ready market	56(224)	16(48)	0(0)	0(0)	272	3.78 *
Contact with farmers	52(208)	20(60)	0(0)	0(0)	268	3.72 *
Contact with extension agents	29(116)	11(33)	14(28)	18(18)	195	2.71 *
The state of world oil market	46(184)	15(45)	8(16)	3(3)	284	3.44 *
Government advocacy	29(116)	31(93)	7(14)	5(5)	228	3.17*

** Reasons Cut-off Score = 2.50 (≥ 2.50 = reason; < 2.50 not a reason)*

e) Level of preparedness of those who planned to engage agriculture activities

Some of those who were interested in engaging in agriculture after retirement had actually engaged in it while some were still on the process of total execution or establishment of their respective enterprise (Table 5). Those who were interested in plantation agriculture had high level of preparedness (mean= 2.93), those interested in poultry farming (mean= 2.61) also had high level of preparedness. Others who were interested in fish farming (mean= 2.58) and pig farming (mean= 2.67) also had high level of preparedness. Some of them were interested in integration of poultry and fish farming. The implication is that these sets of workers were conscious of the future life after retirement. From observation, those who had established were those who had few numbers of years left to disengage in terms of retirement. They started early to prepare too so that they would get to understand the intricacies of agricultural business and master it before finally disengaging, so that they would not find themselves in a new terrain.

The level of preparedness of the workers is an index of the importance they attach to agriculture and their level of consciousness on life after retirement.

Table 5 : Level of preparedness of oil workers who planned to engage in agriculture (n = 72)

Stages of preparedness						
proposed enterprise/ enterprise engaged in	Planning (1)	Purchased land and equipment (2)	Preparing to plant/establish (3)	Planted/ started (4)	Score	Mean
Plantation agriculture (oil palm) (n = 44)	6(6)	12(24)	5(15)	21(84)	129	2.93
Poultry farming (n = 18)	4(4)	5(10)	3(9)	6(24)	47	2.61
Fish farming (n = 12)	2(2)	5(10)	1(3)	4(16)	31	2.58
Pig farming (n = 9)	1(1)	3(6)	3(9)	2(8)	28	2.67
Arable crop farming (n = 0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0	0

Overall mean = 2.70

There were double responses; Cut-off Score = 2.50 (≥ 2.50 = high level of preparedness; < 2.50 = low preparedness level)

Overall their level of preparedness is high as evidenced by the mean of means (2.70). This finding is inconsonance with Gautam (1999) who asserted that return migrants acquire land, establish farms and manage such farms on return to their villages of origin, from their savings while working in urban settlements. Fadajomi (1998); Afolabi (2007) opine that rural-urban migration has negative impacts on agricultural productivity because of the productive rural communities citizens that have left.

However, Ofuoku (2012) suggests that a reversal in this trend in migration will contribute to the mitigation of this challenge to agricultural productivity. The interest in and establishment of agricultural enterprise of this set of oil related company workers will therefore help to mitigate the negative impact of rural-urban migration of productive young men and women on their return to the village to settle down on the farming business. Be that as it may, we should not be oblivions of the fact that Okpara (1983) reveals in his studies that the number of rural-urban migrants is higher than that of urban-rural migrants.

f) Influence of the number of years left to retirement on the level of preparedness of oil workers invested in agriculture

Table 6 shows that a strong inverse relationship exists between the number of years left for the oil company workers in service and their level of preparedness for farming after retirement. It indicates that the lower the number of years they were left to be in service, the higher their level of preparedness for farming after retirement. This is congruent with *a priori* expectation. The implication is that for fear of the future, these workers took their investment in agricultural serious.

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Table 6 : Influence of number of years left on level of preparedness for farming

Variables	Years left for service	Level of preparedness
Years left for service	1.000	-0.886*
Level of preparedness	- 0.886*	1.000

** Significant at the 0.05 level*

They are not unaware of the fact that failure to prepare for life after retirement will drive them below the poverty line. This is in consonance with Rogers (1975, 1983) protection motivation theory (PMT). PMT suggests that individuals must perceive that something is harmful or risky before they build up motivation to protect themselves (House *et al*, 2009).

As PMT postulates, according to Rogers (1975, 1983) perceived risk is a motivating factor for adoption, especially when delivered via frightful message connived with idea efficacy.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

Proposed subscription to farming after retirement is low. This is confirmed by the low percentage (31.03%) of workers who indicated that they will restive into farming. These workers have multiple reasons for wanting to retire into farming. These oil companies' workers were highly preparing to retire into farming as their level of preparedness is high. Their level of preparedness was influenced by the number of years they have left to be in the employment of their various employing oil companies.

In consideration of the afore concluded, it is recommended that:

It is important for extension agencies to identify this set of oil company workers and design training programmes for them at regular intervals in order to sustain their interest. These training sessions will enhance their entrepreneurial and technical skills when they finally retire into their farms. It will also make them to be abreast with the latest technologies relating to their farming enterprise.

They should be made opinion leaders on retirement into their respective farms, since most, if not all of them have one level of formal education or the other and have long periods of cosmopolitan exposure. They will help extension agents in the process of convincing farmers with little or no cosmopoliness quality in adoption diffusion process.

Agricultural Extension agencies should carry out advocacy programmes to persuade other of these workers who had not indicated their interest in agricultural investment, to do so persuasively.

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